

A PREACHING SEMINAR FOR
PASTORS IN THE PHILIPPINES

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

A Preaching Seminar For Pastors In The Philippines

This project is a two-day seminar designed to teach preaching to Adventist pastors in the Philippines. The author researched the big idea process and taught the skill through lecture and dialogue. This seminar helped students increase their skill in sermon development.

The primary skill taught and practiced centered on the discovery and development of the big idea of a bible passage. After reviewing the necessary study skills pastors were guided through the process of finding the subject and complement of a text and developing that into a big idea.

A Preaching Seminar for Pastors in the Philippines

Chapter 1: THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

People of every race, creed, and country need hope, encouragement, and exhortation. They languish for want of the Christian gospel. At the dawn of the 21st century the Seventh-day Adventist church is working to meet that need in the Philippines.

The Columbia Encyclopedia indicates that eighty percent of the Philippines population claim to follow the Christian faith. Centuries ago Spain made the nation Catholic and the American occupation of WWII was responsible for teaching the people English which is now the nation's second language.¹

While these factors were favorable to the growth of Christianity in the Philippines it remains a third world country with all the associated problems. These problems include limited resources. From a financial and educational perspective this dynamic has hobbled the ability of the Seventh-day Adventist church to fund its work and educate its workers in this country.

In the face of this dilemma comes the question; what can be done to assist the Philippines Seventh-day Adventist church in the education of its pastors? This study is a response to that need.

¹Bartleby.Com. "The Philippines," *The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition*, <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ph/PhilipRep.html> (updated 2005) (accessed September 5, 2005)

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This project is undertaken to equip Adventist pastors in the Philippines with the skills they need to effectively preach God's Word. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as in any church, there is a great need for sound biblical preaching. This is especially true in the Philippines and other third world countries where there is limited access to seminary training. By virtue of their training and experience North American educators are in a unique position to help their fellow believers in Southeast Asia.

This seminar is designed to be a basic course in developing the big idea of a sermon with the Seventh-day Adventist Filipino pastor as the target audience. The average Adventist Filipino pastor is dedicated, enthusiastic, and college trained. Most have not been to seminary and leaders of the church in this part of the world recognize the problem and are eager to recruit North American professionals to educate their pastors.

This course is designed for pastors in the Philippines who have a college education and are currently serving a church. It will span two days and include teaching methods designed to help the student experience the homiletical process. The students will be carefully guided through a method of developing the big idea. Along with lecture-based sessions there will also be learning activities designed to draw the student into the practice of preaching.

The inspiration and wisdom of Dr. Haddon Robinson, Dr. Sid Buzzell, and Dr. Don Sunukjian have had a significant influence on the concept and composition of this course. The class will be designed to accommodate six to eight students and the following outline represents the components of the seminar. Over a period of two days, the concept of the big idea will be taught, discussed and reviewed. These days are divided into nine sessions.

The following seminar will comprise chapter four of this thesis/project. It is designed to be a study of sermon development with special attention devoted to the big idea concepts taught by Dr. Haddon Robinson.

COURSE OUTLINE

DAY 1	DAY 2
1) Introduction to the course ➤ 8:30 – 9:15 am - 45 Minutes 2) The importance of a Big Idea ➤ 9:30 – 10:30 am - 1 hour 3) Study the passage ➤ 10:45- 12 - 1.25 hour <p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH</p> 4) Determine the subject and complement ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours 5) State the Big Idea ➤ 3:00 – 4:30 pm - 1.5 hours	6) Explaining the Big Idea ➤ 8:30-9:30 am 1 hour 7) Proving the Big Idea ➤ 9:45 – 10:45 am - 1 hour 8) Applying the Big Idea ➤ 11:00 – 12 - 1 hour <p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH</p> 9) Giving purpose to the Big Idea ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours

After interviewing Pastor Dale Galusha, a veteran of many evangelistic events in the Philippines and Pastor David Go, a Filipino pastor in Manila, it seems that a seminar of this nature would be welcome. Strained resources have led district pastors to commission lay pastors who may or may not have formal ministerial training. Local leaders are eager to better equip the workers but their funds are limited. There is not enough money to adequately staff the many churches and fund the training needed for pastoral leadership.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is important for at least three reasons. First, there is a great need for instruction. As stated earlier, the average Filipino pastor has not had the educational opportunities afforded his American counterpart. It is the privilege and responsibility of those more fortunate to share with others in God's family.

Secondly, the people in the Philippines need to hear a message from God. Preaching remains a primary means of proclaiming the message in every culture. Strengthening the preaching skills of the Filipino pastor will contribute to the health and growth of the church in that part of the world.

And third, there is a clear directive from the Scriptures to preach. "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in

season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:1, 2). This is a specific charge from God to a young worker.

Preach the word! Any effort made to pursue this work is consistent with God's will.

Chapter 2: A THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

Christianity has long valued preaching in its worship and evangelistic endeavors. It is the purpose of this project to build on that tradition and develop a preaching seminar for Seventh-day Adventist pastors in the Philippines. That task raises certain questions that should be considered in order to build this project on a biblical foundation.

- Who gives the call to preach?
- Who is called to preach?
- What is preaching?
- What is the message?
- What does preaching accomplish?
- Why take a preaching seminar to the Philippines?
- And finally, how should a preacher approach the task of preaching?

WHO GIVES THE CALL TO PREACH?

Long ago King Zedekiah posed a question to Jeremiah that still echoes today, “Is there any word from the Lord?” (Jeremiah 37:17). The prophet responded with a word from God and promptly found himself in a dungeon. It was not easy, Jeremiah learned, to boldly speak for Lord but he courageously ignored his own comfort and delivered the message.

Not many have heard from God in the way Jeremiah did but the church has been blessed with the record of God's word in Scripture. So when people hungry for meaning come to the church and ask, "Is there any word from the Lord?" The answer to that question is a resounding "yes!" because the word of God is alive and well in the prophetic voice of the Bible. It is left for the contemporary preacher to boldly declare that same word.

God has always stepped into human history and grabbed man by the spiritual lapels with a word from on high. One of the first preachers he called was antediluvian Noah. The message was a simple one; declare the end of the world to a degenerate race. There is no record of Noah preaching any message other than one of impending doom, and yet Peter calls him a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5).

Apparently, Noah not only foretold the destruction of the world he also trumpeted the way of escape. It was an unpopular message he delivered but he wasn't speaking for himself. He was simply, yet powerfully, declaring the word of God. Unfortunately, he was not a very good preacher by modern standards because only eight people were saved. Fortunately, however, Noah was concerned with only one statistic and that statistic was the one and only God. If he was true to the message then he had been true to his calling. Noah did what every preacher must do; declare the authoritative word of God. Hence Peter's glowing commendation, a "preacher of righteousness."

In a sense, the task of preaching is a natural outgrowth of theology. The two Greek words that form ‘theology’ are *theos*, meaning ‘God,’ and *logos*, meaning ‘word.’ Theology is simply ‘the word of God,’ or the ‘study of God.’ Preaching then is the proclamation of that same word. Preaching takes theology, or God’s word, and places it before listening hearts.

This fundamental truth is foundational to the preacher’s calling and yet it is increasingly suspect in a pluralistic world. People are not inclined to have their lives measured by Scripture and so they endeavor to discredit the messenger and the message by asking, Why should I listen to a Christian preacher? Why should I take his preaching seriously? Though this attitude rankles the average Christian it is nevertheless a fair question and one that deserves attention in the 21st century.

However, it needs to be noted that it is not a new question. “Why should I listen to you?” is a refrain that the first century apostles encountered often as they preached the gospel. Because their credentials were challenged at every turn they took great pains to clarify their calling. They knew that the effectiveness of their preaching was directly linked to the divine origin of their mission.

Two of the most notable preachers of the early church, Peter and Paul, were clear about the nature of their calling and the source of their inspiration. Peter describes his inspiration like this.

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the

morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

The stirring summation of Peter's declaration is captured in the opening words of verse 20. "Above all," or "knowing this first" as the King James Version renders it, places the conclusion directly in the spotlight. And the conclusion is; "The words I speak don't come from me they come from God. That is what Scripture is all about; the word of God. Holy men of old did not speak of their own accord, they spoke for God. They were carried along by the Holy Spirit and given the message to share."

It is important to understand that Peter is offering a significant disclaimer. It would have been tempting to be puffed up by the gift of prophecy but Peter states that the prophetic word has its origins with God. Scripture does not come about by man's interpretation. It does not originate with the will of man.

On the contrary, God brings light to lost humanity by the Holy Spirit. Bo Reicke captures it like this: "...the spirit is the divine power which stimulates the individual to speak and to communicate superhuman wisdom."² This is what is meant when Peter says that holy men of God were, "carried along by the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:21).

Peter knew about being carried along by the Holy Spirit because at Pentecost he preached in tongues to thousands of people and 3,000 were converted (Acts 2:40,41). It

² Bo Reicke, *The Anchor Bible, The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 159.

would have been impossible for him to do that in his own power and with his own knowledge and skill. Only God could have fueled the power of Pentecost. The events of that day were Exhibit A of being carried along by the Spirit.

Peter's preaching was miraculous. He knew it and made sure his listeners understood the origin of his credentials. This theme, giving God the complete unreserved credit and glory for the call to preaching, is developed by Peter's contemporary and fellow New Testament luminary; the apostle Paul.

If Exhibit A in New Testament preaching is Peter, then Paul is certainly Exhibit B. He was called to preach shortly after Peter and ended up writing most of the New Testament. Making his mark in the pulpit and on paper, Paul became the most gifted apologist of first century Christianity.

Early on in his ministry he was confronted by Judaizers who were Christians intent on imposing Old Testament ceremonial laws on New Testament gentile converts. This, of course, caused significant problems for the early church. Though often well intentioned the Judaizers were missing the grace of the gospel and hurting new believers in the process. Their misappropriation of the gospel is addressed in the book of Galatians.

George Duncan gives a careful description of this process.

When Gentiles began to accept the Gospel, the question was naturally raised in the Church whether it was sufficient that they should 'belong to Christ,' or must they also put themselves alongside their Jewish-Christian brethren by adhering to the commonwealth of Israel. It was not Paul who first raised the question; but he

recognized more clearly than any other how vital the issue was, and once the battle was joined on it he fought the fight to a finish.³

With such a critical issue facing the church it was imperative that Paul speak with authority. For this reason he goes right to the issue of his calling before he makes his case about righteousness by faith. His soaring personal testimony sets the tone for the entire book.

Somehow Paul sensed that without a testimony validating his call by God his message had no weight. And so early in the letter and with great urgency he authenticates his call by putting his listeners on notice; “the message I preach does not come from me it comes from God.” “I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12).

What Paul is effectively saying is that, “you better listen because I’m not making this up, I’m not parroting a clever orator I heard last week, I’m telling you that this message is from GOD.” In other words, “ignore what I say at your own peril, because God is not to be trifled with.” What is clear above all else in his argument is that his preaching is not only from God it is at God’s initiative he speaks.

But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. (Galatians 1:15-17)

³ George Duncan, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1934), 46.

“God sent me to you,” is the testimony that must be heard, understood, and embraced before a listener can accept the message. In any century, especially the 21st, a congregation must know that the preacher’s message is a word from God.

The detractors in Paul’s day knew that if they could question the credentials of the messenger then the message would be suspect. That is why God gave a plain concept of the call to Paul and the other preachers of Scripture.

In Galatians 1 Paul details the steps that brought him to the pulpit.

1. God set me apart from birth - (v. 15). God always has a plan.
2. God called me by his grace - (v. 15).
 - a. It was not only God who called it was by his GRACE that the call was made.
 - b. There was no inherent virtue in Paul, nothing to recommend him to the ministry. It was by grace alone that God was able to salvage Paul’s life and fit him for his preaching mission.
3. God revealed his Son. (v. 16)
 - a. The Damascus road experience is one of the most noted stories in the New Testament. Paul’s dramatic conversion set the stage for a dramatic ministry.
 - b. The Son of God, Jesus, was revealed *to* Paul and subsequently revealed *in* Paul to the thousands he influenced by pen and word.

- c. This revelation was to accomplish a specific mission; “that I might preach him among the Gentiles.”

The case is clear. It was God who began the work of fitting Paul for the preaching task and God who was completing the work. There was not a shred of human devising in the whole process because Paul responded to God’s call without consulting any man. He did not hesitate. He did not quibble. He responded because he knew the voice of God and its authority in his life. He did not even bother to consult church leadership, choosing rather to bypass the apostles and go immediately into Arabia. This might explain why there was some conflict with Paul at headquarters in Jerusalem.

It is likely that God planned a radical call for Paul because he knew that Paul had a radical message to preach. Because Paul was going to turn the world upside down there could be no doubt about the nature of his call. It had to be clear that it was from God and no other.

And this truth, of course, is the first and foremost element of a theology of preaching. Preaching is the initiative of God in human affairs; the divine call on the human heart. That call has always preceded the message. Jeremiah, Noah, Peter, Paul, and a host of others answered the call and took their places in the work.

WHO IS CALLED TO PREACH?

Paul is one of the best examples of New Testament preachers who were keenly aware of their supernatural calling. He is also an example of a preacher who was aware of his shortcomings and limitations. This truth becomes evident when he reminds the Corinthians of his humble talents. “When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God” (1 Corinthians 2:1).

Today we think of Paul as wise and eloquent but that is not how he viewed himself. According to his own testimony his skills were average. What made him a gospel powerhouse was an above average God!

What was true for Paul was also true for the first century apostles. By no virtue of their own they were specifically appointed to the task of preaching by Jesus. He “...appointed twelve--designating them that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mark 3:14-15).

It seems reasonable to think that God would communicate with his creation but some might question his choice of messengers. His early selections were not the cream of the crop by earthly standards. It appears that Christ went out of his way to avoid education, pedigree, and ability. An examination of the twelve shows them to be common people, unlettered, and without social distinction.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22)

Matthew indicates that the first four disciples called by Jesus were fishermen by occupation. And though fishing was an honorable profession it did not require formal education nor did it lead to status in the religious community. Peter, Andrew, James and John were respectable men but they were not climbing the social ladder. They were hard working ordinary people.

Another disciple that fits the ordinary profile is Philip. In the gospel of John Philip appears a number of times but he always seems a little out of his element.

1. His meager contribution to the problem of feeding the multitude was the observation that the crowd could not be fed even with “two hundred shillings’ worth of bread” (John 6:7).
2. When the Greeks came to see Jesus he had to consult with Andrew before the men were actually brought to Jesus (John 12:12).
3. And it was Philip who, in the upper room, asked Jesus to show them the Father (John 14:8).

Leon Morris notes these moments in Philip’s life and observes that “it is encouraging to reflect that Jesus went out of His way to find this perfectly ordinary Philip

and to enlist him in the apostolic band. Some of the apostles were undoubtedly men of great ability, but Philip compels us to reflect that others were perfectly ordinary people. Christ had and has use for such followers.”⁴

As the work expanded the fledgling church discovered that the apostles could not care for all the members. So after learning that the widows were being neglected the church reorganized and appointed deacons to assist with membership care. This appointment of deacons was a boon for the ministry of the church. “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem” (Acts 6:7).

However, the booming church and its surging growth prompted increased persecution. This persecution forced the work to expand, scattering many to preach in Judea and Samaria. While the apostles stayed by in Jerusalem itinerant preachers began their work and, according to Acts 8:5, even Philip the deacon was commissioned to preach.

In the modern church the office of deacon is not ordinarily considered a preaching position but the Bible says that it was Philip who preached in Samaria. Through the power of the Holy Spirit he became extraordinary in the cause of God.

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many

⁴ Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 162.

paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city. (Acts 8:4-8)

All of this demonstrates that Christ went out of his way to call ordinary people. He undoubtedly did this to show the world that the power of the gospel is in God, not in man. What Jesus most valued in his disciples, both apostles and deacons, was not their ability to lead but their willingness to follow. That willingness, blessed by God, was an unstoppable force for the gospel. It was true then and is true today, “God does not call the gifted, he gifts the called.”

WHAT IS PREACHING?

Ian Pitt-Watson once quipped, “I don’t understand preaching, but I believe in it deeply.”⁵ That sentiment captures the feeling of both preacher and parishioner. For all parties involved the preaching moment is shrouded with intrigue and mystery. There is an air of expectancy when the preacher takes his place before the congregation. What is the message - from God - through the preacher - to us?

And this is the prevailing question for every preacher who sits at his desk in preparation to preach. What is the message from God? Will I bend my thought to Scripture or use Scripture to support my thought? It is this philosophical approach, this question, that remains the guiding compass for the preacher in sermon development.

⁵ Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: WJK Press), 19.

Jesus told his disciples that they were to be witnesses to what they had seen and heard. Paul proclaims that, “I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to *witness* to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

The idea of preacher as witness is an intriguing image that finds its roots in the Old Testament gospel of Isaiah.

Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,
 Who have ears but are deaf.
 All the nations gather together
 and the peoples assemble.
 Which of them foretold this
 and proclaimed to us the former things?
 Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right,
 so that others may hear and say, “It is true.”
 “You are my *witnesses*,” declares the LORD,
 “and my servant whom I have chosen,
 so that you may know and believe me
 and understand that I am he.
 Before me no god was formed,
 nor will there be one after me.
 I, even I, am the LORD,
 and apart from me there is no savior.
 I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—
 I, and not some foreign god among you.
 You are my *witnesses*,” declares the LORD,
 “that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I am he.
 No one can deliver out of my hand.
 When I act, who can reverse it?” (Isaiah 43:8-13)

A careful examination of Isaiah shows that it is divided into three main sections. Chapters 1-35 consist largely of a series of denunciations against transgression and pronouncements of judgments to follow.

In chapters 36-39 there is a recital of events connected with Sennacherib's invasion, Hezekiah's illness, and the visit of the Babylonian envoys. It is in the final portion of Isaiah, chapters 40-66, that pronouncements of judgment and doom are eclipsed by the outpouring of God's grace on the righteous. These are the chapters that have earned Isaiah the name of "the gospel prophet."⁶

This particular passage in the final section of Isaiah amounts to a spiritual summit to examine the evidence for the true God. All the nations are called to present their case so there will be no excuse for blindness.

God reminds Israel of their witness to salvation events. Though not mentioned specifically it is easy to see how they would recall deliverance from Egypt and Assyria. Had any other god done this for them? Absolutely not. It was God and God alone. He goes on to say that "I have revealed and saved and proclaimed – I and not some foreign god among you. You are my *witnesses*," declares the Lord, "that I am God" (Isaiah 43:12).

This passage in Isaiah is one of many in the Old Testament that focus on reminding Israel of what God had done for them. They were prone to wander and at many junctures God would step in and review with them how He had worked out their salvation. Deliverance from Egypt, food and water in the desert, and defeat of their enemies were recurring themes.

⁶ F.D.Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 244.

These events, etched firmly in the consciousness of Israel, were potent reminders of God's saving redeeming power. So when they wandered, when they embraced other gods, when they grumbled and complained God invariably drew them back to what they had witnessed. And in recalling how God had lead in their lives they were often brought back to their senses.

Now when it comes to the modern era, the word 'witness' conjures up pictures of legal proceedings or even theological extremism but it is a useful word and certainly captures a dynamic of the preaching event that bridges both worlds; the world of the Bible and the world of the contemporary audience. "Here is what I have seen and heard."

This concept of witness was an integral element in the spread of Christianity. F.F. Bruce points out that, "The idea of witness is prominent in the preaching throughout Acts."⁷ In fact, the apostles usually referred to their witness credentials as validation for their message. Acts is filled with many such references.

1. Acts 2:32 – "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all *witnesses* of the fact."
2. Acts 3:15 – "You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are *witnesses* of this."
3. Acts 5:32 – "We are *witnesses* of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

⁷ F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 71.

4. Acts 10:39 – “We are *witnesses* of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.”
5. Acts 13:31 – “But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his *witnesses* to our people. “We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.”

As the gospel went to the gentiles Paul’s contemporary, the apostle Peter, embraced the witness metaphor and based his ministry on that premise. When he spoke with the household of Cornelius he validated his message by claiming to be an eye witness.

We are *witnesses* of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by *witnesses* whom God had already chosen-- by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. (Acts 10:39-43)

Not only did Peter proclaim himself a witness he urged his listeners to understand that “all the prophets” (v. 43) testified about the life and ministry of Jesus. Peter’s preaching then, was based on his eye witness account and substantiated by the Old Testament prophet’s testimony that Jesus Christ brings forgiveness of sin to every believer.

While preaching is certainly more than the idea of witnessing it is assuredly nothing less. New Testament preaching is always birthed in an experience with God and obedience to His word.

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

It was in obedience to that word that John the Baptist preached in the Judean wilderness. The prophet Isaiah foretold his preaching as the “voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him’” (Matthew 3:1).

Soon after that rousing message John himself greeted the Messiah, baptized him, and witnessed God’s approval of his own Son. After that moment Jesus embarked on his public ministry. “From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matthew 4:17). “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

It was quite true that the kingdom of heaven was near. The kingdom of heaven was bound up in the person and words of Jesus Christ. They could touch him with their hands, hear him with their ears, see him with their own two eyes. In fact, those first century listeners could even taste the kingdom of God thanks to a small boy’s lunch that fed five thousand. Such miracles made the Messiah’s presence unmistakable. Jesus Christ was present and accounted for. Jesus was God incarnate. Jesus was himself the kingdom of God.

This urgency prevailed throughout the ministry of Christ and in nearly every discourse and parable Jesus strove to impress upon his listeners the nature and immediacy of the kingdom of God. It so consumed him that when he commissioned the twelve to preach he gave them specific instructions about their preaching.

As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give (Matthew 10:7,8).

Preaching did not stand alone but it was certainly central in the work of the first apostles. Their miracles did more than relieve temporal suffering; their miracles validated their preaching of Jesus Christ. He was truly God on earth.

Paul soon took up preaching and his theme was also the revolutionary declaration that Jesus was the son of God. "At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

It is important to note that preaching Jesus Christ does not result in the sameness of every sermon. On the contrary, God is infinite and there will never come a time when the human heart has exhausted the fresh insights to be found in Scripture.

Preachers are often inclined to their favorite themes. For some it is grace, for others faith. Other popular themes are leadership and spiritual gifts. And while it is fine to have an area of special interest it is also important to remember that individual hobby horses do a disservice to the preaching task. Paul was careful to avoid this pitfall and

reminded the church in Ephesus that he had withheld nothing from them that would be helpful in their new found faith.

Toward the end of his ministry he had these words for them. “You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). If it was helpful to the Christian experience then Paul was preaching it. He did not hesitate to preach anything that would be useful. But all the while he remained grounded in his focus on the gospel; Jesus Christ as the sole source and substance of salvation.

WHAT DOES PREACHING ACCOMPLISH?

In every age repentance and salvation have followed preaching. That was Jonah’s experience when he preached to Ninevah. Jesus referred to the repentance of the Ninevites and related Jonah’s preaching to their conversion. “The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:41).

Christ’s statement reminds us that preaching is not a New Testament phenomenon. God has always used this curious medium for the communication of the gospel. Faulty people are called to speak on behalf of a perfect God. It sounds ludicrous to entrust an eternal message to human spokesmen. Angels could undoubtedly do a better

job of bringing the word and will of God to the human race but the fact remains, he chose preachers.

He chose preachers in order to involve mankind in the joy of salvation. They are partners in the proclamation of the gospel. Paul makes this clear in the first chapter of Corinthians. “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe” (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

The wisdom of the world does not understand the gospel but God chooses to save the world through what is preached. And that is what preaching accomplishes; the saving of souls. There is a direct link between preaching and salvation.

In 1 Timothy Paul clarifies how preaching the word brings salvation. “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift . . . Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:13-16). This counsel stands in spite of any uncertainty that may reside in the listener’s heart. And as the word is preached, even the skeptical listener may discern God’s voice; a voice that will bring conviction, decision, and power to follow.

Any discussion of what preaching should accomplish would be incomplete without giving proper attention to Paul's instruction to young preacher Timothy. In 2 Timothy 3 Paul gives this timeless instruction.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

He must have known Timothy well because he commended him on his upbringing. From Jewish tradition we know that parents began teaching the truths of the Old Testament to their children at five years of age.⁸ It's as if Paul was saying, "Timothy, you have been privileged to learn from the Bible since you were a child! You've been blessed with a great beginning and I'm urging you to stick to it. Never let go of your Bible. Never waver in your commitment to its authority and power."

What follows the commendation is a fourfold description of exactly what the Word accomplishes. These four aspects will make one "wise for salvation;" which is the ultimate goal of revelation, inspiration, and preaching. This purpose of Scripture is in direct contrast with other writings of the world. F.D. Nichol states the contrast like this:

The essential purpose of the Bible is not merely to record history, nor even to describe the nature of God. The Bible was written to show men how they may be saved from their sins. There are many so-called "writings" in the world, but only the Bible safely points the way to man's redemption. The great world religions, such as Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, have "holy scriptures," but these cannot make anyone "wise unto salvation."⁹

⁸ J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London, England: Adam & Charles Black, 1972), 201.

⁹ F.D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 246.

In verse 16 Paul identifies the four functions of inspired or “God-breathed” Scripture; it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction. Stephen Olford elaborates on these functions.

1. Doctrine: The Bible is sufficient for Revelation.

- a. “All Scripture is... profitable... for doctrine.” (v.16)
- b. The Bible is the textbook for the preacher and the Christian. It contains doctrine, teaching, and revelation. It is the only place to acquire what is said about God. “The Bible is the only book in the world that imparts knowledge concerning God’s revelation in Christ. This is why Paul emphasizes that “The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (v. 15)¹⁰

2. Reproof: The Bible is Sufficient for Refutation.

- a. “All Scripture is... profitable... for reproof.” (v.16)
- b. The Greek word for ‘reproof’ is *elegmos*, meaning “censure.” “Not only does the Bible censure the sinner; it also provides a refutation of perverted teachings.”¹¹ Like Timothy, any true preacher will have to deal with corrupt teachings and be called to censure that which does not square with the word of God.
- c. Censure is a strong word and not very popular with the secular individualism of today but if the Bible is to have any power to change lives it must remain the gold standard of doctrine and practice.

¹⁰ Stephen Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998), 25.

¹¹ Nichol, 246.

- d. This is demonstrated by Paul's counsel in Ephesians 5:11. "Have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."

And in 1 Timothy 5:20 he is stronger still. "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear."
- e. Olford sums it up well, "This approach to what is evil is a far cry from the compromise of our day! The man of God must ever remember that while times change, *truth never changes*."¹²

3. Correction: The Bible Is Sufficient for Restoration

- a. "All Scripture is... profitable... for correction." (v.16)
- b. Correction can mean "restoration to a right state," or "improvement."¹³

This is possibly the most endearing of any function listed by Paul. How comforting it is to know that the preacher is not only called to rebuke and refute but he is also called to restore. Olford comments on this theme of restoration,
- c. "If reproof underscores the negative aspect, "correction" accents the positive. Like the previous word, this one is only found here in the New Testament. This suggests that Paul is being very specific with his choice of language. Correction means "to set up straight" or "to restore to the original position. The message is clear. The delinquents must not only be rebuked, they must be restored. To those who need the restoring word, Jesus declares: "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). How reassuring to know that God's people can be cleansed by the Word!"¹⁴

4. Instruction: The Bible is Sufficient for Regulation

- a. "All Scripture is... profitable... for training." (v.16)

¹² Olford,, 26.

¹³ F.D.Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7* (Review and Herald, 1980), 247.

¹⁴ Olford, 26.

- b. 'Instruction' is *paideia* in Greek and can mean "discipline, "training," or even "nurture" as it is translated in Ephesians 6:4.¹⁵ Olford adds that, "In a time when indulgence and indiscipline abound on every hand, we need to learn afresh what is meant by "instruction in righteousness" (v. 16) In essence, it is the life of discipleship. To all of us Jesus says, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32). It is evident, therefore, that if we are to be men of God, we must be directed by the Scriptures in every area of our lives."¹⁶

Preaching the word then involves instruction, reproof, correction, and training. Each of these works together in equipping believers for "every good work" (v. 17) in this life and salvation in the life to come (v. 15).

WHY TAKE A PREACHING SEMINAR TO THE PHILIPPINES?

With the call of Abraham God embarked on a mission to set aside a special people to share the truth about him with the world. Eventually Abraham's descendants grew into the chosen nation of Israel and it was to their nation that a redeemer was promised. When he arrived in the person of Jesus Christ history was forever changed.

¹⁵ Nichol, 247.

¹⁶ Olford, 27.

At precisely the moment the prophets had predicted the Messiah made his entrance, proclaiming that the “time was fulfilled” (Mark 1:15). When Jesus began his public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing he was primarily addressing his countrymen, the nation of Israel. He repeatedly directed his miracles and his messages to them as the uniquely appointed ambassadors of salvation.

At one point in his ministry a Canaanite mother approached him with a desperate plea to deliver her daughter from demons. Jesus responded to her appeal but not without hesitation. The record says that he put her off. His curious reply must have been baffling to the assembled onlookers, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). What did that mean? It meant that Jesus’ primary preaching audience was the lost house of Israel. One last time God was going all out to get their attention and rescue their nation. Would they listen? Would they believe?

As it turns out they would do neither. Nevertheless, Christ’s preaching during his three and a half years on earth was directed to the leadership and collective consciousness of Israel. “He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons” (Mark 1:39). “A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them” (Mark 2:1). He preached in synagogues, in homes, on a hillside, and even from a boat—but his audience remained the same—the nation of Israel.

Yet while Christ's preaching was directed to Israel he informed his disciples that the gospel would soon be preached to the entire *world*. "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

In his commentary on the offering of the poor widow he reiterated the global nature of the gospel. "I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the *world*, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her" (Matthew 26:13).

These allusions to future ministry became specific instructions as Jesus neared the end of his earthly ministry. Beginning with Matthew 28:19,20 the mission was unmistakably clarified.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

In his case Matthew uses the Greek word "*matheteuw*," meaning "to make a disciple." This familiar term in the New Testament emphasizes the teaching aspect of ministry.

So it is fair to say that discipling and preaching (teaching) are the prescribed methods for evangelizing the world. But Christ's words were more than a reference to method, they comprised a shift in focus.

This shift is evident when comparing the commission of Matthew 28 with Christ's earlier commission in Matthew 10. In Matthew 10 the disciples received instructions to go *only* to the lost house of Israel. "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matthew 10:5-7).

This specific instruction is important because it demonstrates that Jesus directed the disciples *away* from the gentiles and Samaritans and *toward* the people of Israel, "the lost sheep of Israel." Why would Jesus exclude the gentiles from hearing the gospel? He excluded them because his focus was on Israel. He did not exclude them because they were unloved or unworthy. For three and one-half years His mission and the mission of His disciples was to bring the good news to the chosen nation but after Calvary, when it became clear that Israel was intent on rejecting the gospel, Jesus expanded the mission to include the gentiles. The gospel would soon be on its way to the whole world.

A few weeks later this command is reiterated at Christ's ascension in what could be called the second commission. It seems that the disciples were still incredulous at the thought of preaching to the whole world. They were so close to the truth and yet so far from grasping their impending mission. We know this because the Bible records their sincere question, asked just before He ascended. "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They expected that now was the moment of truth. Now, in his resurrected glory Jesus would take his place on the throne of Israel and the kingdom of God would be established once and for all.

Yet instead of affirming their kingdom-on-earth desires Jesus turned their thinking upside down and commissioned them to preach the gospel to the *whole world*. In other words he was saying, “Don’t concern yourself with dates and times about my return, you just tell what you have seen and heard.” Luke records the conversation like this.

So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (Acts 1:6-9)

These are the last words of Jesus to his disciples and in these words are a promise and directive. The promise is that they would be given power (Greek, *dunamis*) to do great things for God. This power would give them the strength of electricity; supernatural power poured out on those who received the Holy Spirit. And what would this power accomplish? It would give them power to be witnesses. Witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Witnesses to the promise of his return.

With these last words it is interesting to note that there is a marked change in the scope of the gospel. No longer is Jesus directing all of the Church’s energies to the nation of Israel. They have rejected the opportunity to embrace the Messiah so now the message is going to circle the globe. Jesus traced their sphere of ministry as ever enlarging concentric circles, beginning in Jerusalem and expanding to include the world.

1. Jerusalem and Judea

- a. Jesus had no desire to lose those with whom he had labored so long. He wanted to give the lost house of Israel every opportunity to repent so the Holy Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem at Pentecost. “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:4,5).
- b. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles in Jerusalem it caused no small stir. People were amazed at their speech and cut to the heart by their words. Peter forthrightly declared that they had crucified the Son of God. Luke states that, “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:40,41). Not bad for a days work! The context is clear that Peter’s audience at Pentecost was primarily the house of Israel. A few years later, after the stoning of Stephen they would finally seal their rejection of the gospel and it was at that point that the gospel formally went to the gentiles (Acts 8).

2. Samaria – Acts 8-12

- a. The Samaritans were a mixed race that had little use for the Jews. However, they were not excluded from the gospel net. After the stoning of Stephen the Bible says that Phillip went to minister in a city of Samaria. “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there”
(Acts 8:4-5).

3. The ends of the earth - Acts 13 - 28
 - a. Persecution scattered the early church and Saul, who later became Paul, was eager to squash the fledgling movement. His quest was derailed by a heavenly vision that literally knocked him down and turned him around. It is Paul’s conversion that marks sending of the gospel to the ends of the earth. He embarked on at least three distinct missionary journeys that carried him beyond the borders of Palestine.
 - b. The majority of Acts is devoted to this world wide work accomplished by Paul and the early church.

The outline of Acts is the fulfillment of the gospel commission through the ministry of the earliest Christian preachers. Jesus commanded them to take the gospel to the world by preaching and teaching and a careful examination of Acts demonstrates their obedience to that command.

The empowered church committed itself to preaching and there was tremendous growth. Today, there is hardly a corner of the earth that has gone untouched. One developing field of evangelism is the Philippines in the South Pacific where there is a significant need for adequately trained preachers.

The church is working to equip its pastors for preaching but the instructional resources are lacking. This means that volunteers are needed to bring instruction and inspiration to those Filipino pastors who have been called to preach.

That is why this seminar is being conducted. It is my desire to make a small contribution to the gospel work by helping fellow ministers understand the preaching task and acquire preaching skills. Responding to this need in the Philippines is consistent with the original commission given to the early apostles.

HOW SHOULD A PREACHER APPROACH THE TASK OF PREACHING?

Soon after his conversion Paul journeyed to Jerusalem to meet with the Christians there but his only credential was a record of persecuting believers. It's hard to imagine that he expected a warm greeting but still he went to preach. What worked in his favor was his miraculous conversion and the amazing transformation in his life.

To overcome the legitimate anxieties of his listeners he appealed to his encounter with Jesus. As it turns out, his incredible story eventually carried the day and his ministry ignited the early church. What is intriguing about Paul is that he spoke without apology. No stuttering or stammering. No excuses.

In the book of Acts, Luke clearly describes this aspect of Paul's preaching.

But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached *fearlessly* in the

name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. (Acts 9:27-28)

Because of his life experience Paul was able to speak authoritatively about preaching. In his counsel to young Timothy Paul taught that preaching should be approached with a strong resolve. The conditions would vary and the seasons would change, some would turn away from listening, there would be hardship and difficulty but still Timothy was urged to correct, rebuke, and encourage with “great patience and careful instruction.”

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:2-5)

When Paul tells Timothy to preach the Word there can be no doubt as to what that word is. It is the Word described in the previous chapter, the same Word that is good for “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

In 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul lists four responsibilities of the preacher as he approaches the task of preaching.

1. **Keep your head in all situations.** It is easy to let emotion cause a person to make bad decisions. Those bad decisions are problematic for the preacher who desires to model the transforming grace of the gospel.
2. **Endure hardship.** There is something about enduring hardship that seasons the preacher. It gives him credibility with listeners because of the shared struggle. He can preach legitimately about faith in God because his own faith has been tested.

3. **Do the work of an evangelist.** This reminds the preacher that the goal of preaching is a calling people to decision. Evangelism is winning hearts to Jesus.
4. **Discharge all the duties of your ministry.** This last directive involves the whole realm of influence. It is a caution to preachers who might be inclined to settle for an entertaining word in the pulpit while leaving other aspects of ministry idle. When other aspects of a preacher's life are not in order it affects the message from the pulpit. Because he is in the public eye people watch how he generally conducts himself. And if his walk does not match his talk then even his most eloquent sermons will be ineffective. It's a hard truth but one that should be embraced.

At first glance it sounds daunting. Who can possibly measure up? The answer lies in the power of God because man is nothing without his Maker. Without direct and consistent empowerment from God it is a lost cause. Preaching cannot be done with raw talent alone because a sermon is more than a speech, it is a word from God.

Paul was a bright man but even he made it clear that he came to the preaching task, not with his own wise and persuasive words, but with the power of the Spirit. "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). For the aspiring preacher Paul's testimony and counsel are worth remembering.

Chapter 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Paul captured the mystery of preaching when he proclaimed that, “It pleased God by the *foolishness* of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). The cross of Jesus was truly foolishness to the gentiles. This fact leads to a reasonable question, Why make such a big deal out of Calvary? Why call humans to proclaim “nonsense” to an unbelieving world?

The task is difficult at best and, it would seem, certainly too great for faulty humans. Surely God could have called angels to do the work. It would have been far less trouble than employing human messengers such as prophets, preachers, and teachers. But for some reason God bypassed heavenly envoys and chose man. We are not told why he adopted this plan but the answer must have something to do with His passion for a heart relationship with men and women.

This condescension to include man in the plan of salvation is truly humbling. To preach for God is a privilege and responsibility. Foolish it was and still is but, for parishioner and preacher, the gospel is the focal point of purpose and direction in church life.

It is difficult to over estimate the importance of preaching the gospel and maybe that is why it has attracted so much commentary. In this chapter I have not included all of

the books written on homiletics, just the ones that specifically contribute to the purpose of this thesis project.

In Chapter 2, A Theology of Preaching, the theological foundation of this project was framed by fundamental questions regarding this course. In Chapter 3, the Literature Review, the same questions will be used as a basis for discussing the literary contributions in the corresponding areas of preaching and the teaching of preaching.

- Who gives the call to preach?
- Who is called to preach?
- What is preaching?
- What is the message?
- What does preaching accomplish?
- Why take a preaching seminar to the Philippines?
- And finally, how should a preacher approach the task of preaching?

WHO GIVES THE CALL TO PREACH?

Handbook of Contemporary Preaching

The premise of expository preaching is that it seeks to communicate *God's* word, not the word of man. To rightly express that word in any culture, the preacher must establish his credibility by clarifying the origin of preaching.

The books in this section offer important insight on the origin of preaching by examining God's call to pulpit ministry. They show that God calls the preacher and governs the entire process of communicating His Word.

The first volume of interest is the *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*. It is a collection of essays by noted theologians and preachers, covering a broad range of preaching subjects. It is a good treatment of the preaching process including sermon preparation and ethics in ministry.

Of particular interest is Part 1 – “The Roots of Contemporary Preaching.” In this section R. Albert Mohler addresses a theology of preaching and delivers a wonderful perspective on a God-centered approach.

He begins by saying that preaching is a distinctively Christian practice.

A theology of preaching begins with the humble acknowledgement that preaching is not a human invention but a gracious creation of God and a central part of His revealed will for the church. Furthermore, preaching is distinctively Christian in

its origin and practice. Other religions may include teaching, or even public speech and calls to prayer. However, the preaching act is *sui generis*, a function of the church established by Jesus Christ.¹⁷

Mohler adds that “God has called the church to speak of Him on the basis of His Word and deeds. All Christian preaching is biblical preaching.”¹⁸ This preaching is naturally an expression of God Himself in the church.

According to Mohler the divine origins of preaching are demonstrated in the Trinitarian formula.

The primary Greek form of the word “preach” (*kerusso*) reveals its intrinsic rootage in the kerygma – gospel itself. Preaching is an inescapably theological act, for the preacher dares to speak of God and, in a very real sense, *for* God. A theology of preaching should take Trinitarian form, reflecting the very nature of the self-revealing God. In so doing, it bears witness to the God who speaks, the Son who saves, and the Spirit who illuminates.¹⁹

The Trinitarian form of preaching advocated by Mohler is further explained by examining the specific ways in which the triune God shapes the approach of the biblical preacher. He shows that each member of the Godhead shines a unique perspective on what it means to speak for God. The following outline demonstrates how together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise a complete and balanced perspective on biblical preaching.

1. The God Who Speaks

- a. Preaching begins with God.

¹⁷ Michael Duduit, *Handbook Of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

- b. “Preaching springs from the truth that *God has spoken* in word and deed and that He has chosen human vessels to bear witness to Himself and His gospel. We speak because we cannot be silent. We speak because God has spoken.”²⁰

2. The Son Who Saves

- a. Preaching continues with the Son.
- b. The Son is the incarnation of God in Christ as the stockpile of truth and the core of Christian confession. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Thus, preaching is itself an act of grace, making clear God’s initiative toward us in *the Son who saves*. That message of divine salvation, the unmerited act of God in Christ, is the criterion by which all preaching is to be judged.”²¹

3. The Spirit Who Illuminates.

- a. The external minister (preacher) stands before the congregation but the Internal Minister (Holy Spirit) illuminates, inspires, convicts, and regenerates.
- b. To preach “in the Spirit” is to preach with the acknowledgement that the human instrument has no control over the message – and no control over the Word as it is set loose within the congregation. The Spirit, as John declared, testifies, “because the Spirit is the truth” (1 John 5:6b, NIV).²²

Mohler concludes his remarks with an insight about God’s call on preachers.

“God has called out preachers and commanded them to preach. Preaching is not an act

²⁰ Ibid., 16.

²¹ Ibid., 16.

²² Ibid., 19.

the church is called to defend but a ministry preachers are called to perform. Thus, whatever the season, the imperative stands: Preach the Word!”²³

Anointed Expository Preaching

In *Anointed Expository Preaching*, Stephen Olford addresses the theme of God ordained preaching from a careful biblical perspective. His careful study of the Bible leads him to address preaching in the context of biblical revelation, biblical exposition, and biblical proclamation. He feels that the “the call to preach is the sovereign initiative of God in the life and experience of the one who is predestinated to fulfill that role.”²⁴

Olford refers to the initiative of God as “his eternal call of Grace.”²⁵ This call is evidenced in a number of biblical lives including Paul’s.

It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace (Galatians 1:15). To the apostle, the call of God was no unpremeditated event. Before time was determined, Paul was in the mind of God. This is the significance of the phrase “separated...from my mother’s womb.” Before Paul could think, speak, or act, God had marked him out as a chosen vessel to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (see John 15:16).

Though God had to use extreme measures to gain Paul’s attention, Paul passionately responded to God’s grace and the call to preach. The validity of his call was evidenced in the ensuing months and years as God worked through his ministry. This process of authenticating the call of God is critical to the success of a preaching ministry because power can only follow strong conviction.

²³ Ibid., 20.

²⁴ Olford, 8.

²⁵ Ibid., 9.

In this vein Olford offers five questions to consider as the preacher reviews the call of God in his life. Candid answers to these questions will clarify God's leading in the call to ministry.

1. *Do I meet the qualifications of a preacher, as set forth in the Word of God?* When God called Paul to be a preacher, He clearly delineated what was involved and required (see Acts 9:15-16, 20; 22:14-15; 26:16-18). You cannot study these divine instructions without discerning both the qualifications and responsibilities of a preacher.

2. *Have I witness of the Spirit in my heart that God has called me?* The same Holy Spirit who witnesses with my spirit that I have been born of God also witnesses with my spirit that I have been called of God to be a preacher (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 1:15-16; 2 Tim. 1:8-11). As you pray earnestly about the matter, "the sense of call" will either come alive or die altogether. When Paul prayed "Lord, what do You want me to do?" he received the answer.

3. *Has the gift of the preacher become evident in my life and service?* First Corinthians 12:7 declares that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all." This "manifestation" is not human ability alone, but rather the indwelling and directing power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the "sense of call" comes through "inferential" means. A set of circumstances will be ordered providentially to bring about a growing conviction that God has called you to be a preacher. This will explain why men who initially followed other professions subsequently become preachers. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen when Jesus called them. (Mark 1:16-20)

4. *Has my church recognized and confirmed my preaching gift?* First Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6-7 give a significant object lesson in the divine human recognition and confirmation of a person's gift and ministry in the early church (see also Acts 13:1-4).

5. *Has God used my preaching gift to the salvation of souls and the edification of saints?* Writing to the Corinthians, Paul could affirm with confidence, "You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord" (1 Cor. 9:2). Can you point to converts or disciples and say the same thing?²⁶

²⁶Ibid., 13.

Famine in the Land

Olford's discussion of God's call to preach forms a wonderful foundation for *Famine in the Land*, authored by Steven Lawson. In this book Lawson discusses God inspired preaching by examining the life and ministry of Jonah.

When Jonah received a direct call from God he tried to dodge it unsuccessfully. But when God finally got a hold of him he demonstrated the unique power of one voice to change lives. Lawson notes how “. . .The book of Jonah is the remarkable account of *one* man (Jonah), equipped with *one* message (God's), committed to *one* method (preaching), who effected great spiritual change. It is no different today. God's work must be done God's way if it is to know God's blessing.”²⁷

The power demonstrated through Jonah illustrates the principle that, “. . .the power of biblical preaching is rooted and grounded in God's sovereign calling of His chosen servant. This heavenly summons is foundational to powerful preaching. Those whom God calls to preach His Word must know they are divinely selected to carry out His assignment.”²⁸

Lawson and others are of one voice in response to the question, “Who gives the call to preach?” the answer is clear; it is God who gives the call. Moreover, a common thread runs through each commentary on this question. Not only does God give the call, each preacher must know in his heart that he has been called. For any potential preacher this is

²⁷ Steve Lawson, *Famine In The Land* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 58.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

the critical juncture in ministry, and the most mystical. It is only through prayerful listening that one can be assured of God's call to preach. Any doubts about ability and talent should be banished because those God calls he will enable.

One great preacher, Charles Spurgeon, eloquently spoke of the need for courageous preachers. He is quoted by Lawson in his discussion of compelling preaching.

We want again Luthers, Calvins, Bunyans, Whitefields, men fit to mark eras, whose names breathe terror in our foemen's ears. We have dire need of such. Whence will they come to us? They are the gifts of Jesus Christ to the Church, and will come in due time. He has power to give us back again a golden age of preachers, and when the good old truth is once more preached by men whose lips are touched as with a live coal from off the altar, this shall be the instrument in the hand of the Spirit for bringing about a great and thorough revival of religion in the land. I do not look for any other means of converting men beyond the simple preaching of the gospel and the opening of men's ears to hear it. The moment the Church of God shall despise the pulpit, God will despise her. It has been through the ministry that the Lord has always been pleased to revive and bless His Churches.²⁹

²⁹ Ibid., 75.

WHO IS CALLED TO PREACH?

No Place for Truth

Closely related to the divine call to preach is the question of who receives the call. What is God looking for in a spokesperson? One thing is clear, God has used many spokespersons over the centuries including angels, children, and even Balaam's donkey. This evidence validates an important truth; ability and eloquence are not God's primary concern, He is most interested in the preacher's willingness to embrace the mission and preach the word.

In *No Place For Truth* David Wells contends that the singular requirement for one who is called to preach is that they are "servants of the Word." Who then is called to preach? The person who accepts the challenge to be directed and driven by the Word, and the Word alone.

Wells proceeds to take a sharp pen to the state of evangelical preaching and its lack of commitment to theology. He believes that pastors are shackled by the professionalization of the pastorate and impermanence in the parish. By professionalization he means the encroachment of other disciplines, such as psychology, on the ministry task. This influence, according to Wells, diminishes what should be the guiding discipline; commitment to theology. He describes the plight like this.

...the professionalized pastor has often reduced the uncontrollable world of God's truth by procedure, using committees to diminish the Church and psychological techniques to diminish the soul. Rough truth gives way to smooth practice, the

transcendent gives way to the procedural, the jerks and moments of discovery when God's world illumines our own give way to moments in which our world brings his into tame submission. As the world of Christian truth breaks down, the hands of the professionals reach up to seize and overcome what is not rightfully theirs...where professionalization is at work, there the ministry will typically be deprived of its transcendence and reduced to little more than a helping profession.³⁰

Adding to the concern of professionalization is the pursuit of career by pastors. Because society is so mobile both pastors and parishioners find it more difficult to build lasting, permanent relationships. This impermanence leads pastors to seek careers rather build ministries. But Wells contends that building a career robs the pastor of the freedom he needs to address contemporary society. The freedom of preachers to address the church and world as directed by the Bible "...lies not in their professional status or their current location along the trajectory of a career. It lies in the fact that they serve the living God, who is no respecter of persons, in the fact that they are the servants of his Word and Son, before whom all will be judged."³¹

When the call to preach is considered, the one who answers that call must have a firm commitment to the Bible and theology. Any other standard will diminish the spoken word and subvert the intended mission. Wells powerfully reminds preachers of their scriptural and theological moorings, and while his message may not be a popular theme in evangelical circles, it is a word that needs to be heard.

³⁰ David Wells, *No Place For Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 248.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

WHAT IS PREACHING?

Biblical Preaching

Once a preacher understands the divine origins of preaching and has accepted the call to preach he must consider the question, What is Preaching? In pursuing the answer he will discover that preaching is both singular and diverse.

While it is grounded in God's call and God's word it is varied to meet the contemporary situation and audience. Just as there are many genres of Scripture so there are many avenues to the heart through the spoken word. Narratives, parables, poetry, psalms, and epistles are a few of the many ways God has communicated.

The most important and helpful book to address the substance of preaching is *Biblical Preaching*, by Haddon Robinson. He helps the student of preaching engage in careful thinking about his task. He is quick to say, "It is difficult to think. It is more difficult to think about thinking. It is most difficult to talk about thinking about thinking. Yet that stands as the basic task of homiletics."³² It is this invaluable thinking through the thinking process that produces a superb understanding of sermon preparation.

For some years now *Biblical Preaching* has been the benchmark for homiletical instruction. It is without peer as an instructional text on preaching because no one has improved on its sensible uncluttered approach to the preaching task.

³² Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 51.

It follows the premise that people waiting for the word of God deserve to hear a message from that same word. For this reason Robinson says that the passage should govern the preacher's sermon. This approach is recognized as expository preaching. Robinson's working definition of expository preaching has become an accepted standard and is foundational to the development of this project.

Expository preaching is...

- The communication of a biblical concept,
- Derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context,
- Which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, Then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.³³

Robinson goes on to offer a significant insight on this approach to preaching.

"Expository preaching at its core is more a philosophy than a method. Whether or not we can be called expositors starts with our purpose and with our honest answer to the question: "Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures, or do you use the Scriptures to support your thought?"³⁴

This course in preaching is largely dependent on Robinson's tested principles of homiletical instruction; principles consistent with Scripture and committed to communicating the "Big Idea" of the biblical passage being preached. Getting at this "Big Idea" is the most critical and rewarding aspect of sermon development. On this

³³ Ibid., 21.

³⁴ Ibid., 22.

theme he observes that, "...those who hear us preach do not understand what we are saying unless they can answer the basic questions: What were we talking about today? What were we saying about what we were talking about?"³⁵ This approach to preaching is challenging but "...when God calls us to preach, He calls us to love Him with our minds. God deserves that kind of love and so do the people to whom we minister."³⁶

Hard on the heels of "Big Idea" importance is the fact that the human instrument is closely related to the sermon. Yes, God's power makes it go from beginning to end but the message comes through a preacher, and a life inconsistent with the message diminishes its power. Robinson describes it like this.

As much as we might wish it otherwise, we cannot be separated from the message. Who has not heard some devout brother or sister pray in anticipation of a sermon, "Hide our pastor behind the cross so that we may see not him but Jesus only? We commend the spirit of such a prayer. Men and women must get past the preacher to the Savior. (Or perhaps the Savior must get past the preacher to the people!) Yet no place exists where a preacher may hide. Even a large pulpit cannot conceal us from view. Phillips Brooks was on to something when he described preaching as "truth poured through personality." We affect our message. We may be mouthing a scriptural idea, yet we can remain as impersonal as a telephone recording, as superficial as a radio commercial, or as manipulative as a con man. *The audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a person - they hear you.*³⁷

Biblical Preaching has a lot to offer and is the single most important volume I studied. Learning its principles is essential for anyone who preaches.

³⁵ Ibid., 46.

³⁶ Ibid., 46.

³⁷ Ibid., 25, 26.

The Witness of Preaching

In *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson teaches an approach to expository preaching while Thomas Long in, *The Witness of Preaching*, gives an overview of three perspectives on preaching. He contends that three metaphors define the preaching task. These metaphors not only describe the nature of the preacher but also embrace, by implication, all the crucial aspects of the preaching event. These three “master” metaphors are: the *herald*, the *pastor*, and the *storyteller*.³⁸

The herald image is easiest to grasp because it is consistent with the idea of proclamation found in the Greek word *kerusso*. The emphasis with this model is the origin and basis of the message. There is much to recommend this approach because it guards the integrity of the word. A clever speaker is not necessarily a good preacher. A good preacher is one who faithfully proclaims the word. Preaching is more than a good speech or an entertaining monologue. It is a direct connection with the throne of God, a word from on high.

This model is attractive to those who hold a high view of Scripture. “The preacher is not sent to evaluate the message, to try to make it more palatable, or to debate its relative merits—only to announce it faithfully.”³⁹ There is considerable strength to this approach because its main value lies in its insistence upon the transcendent dimension of preaching.⁴⁰

³⁸ Thomas Long, *The Witness Of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

The herald places special emphasis on the historical-grammatical influences on the text. Long further explores these influences in, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. His discussion of the various genres of biblical literature such as psalms, proverbs, narrative, parables, or the epistles, demonstrates how the literary forms influence interpretation. An understanding of these forms enables the herald to clarify and sharpen the message of the word.

Again, the emphasis in the herald image is on the message back then. What was the word to be declared? This is an important thought for the preacher to keep in mind yet it has a weakness that is exposed by the preacher-as-pastor metaphor. With the preacher-as-pastor approach the needs of the hearers take on much more prominence than they do for the herald.⁴¹ “For the herald, the most important dimension of preaching is the message. For the pastor, the crucial dimension of preaching is an event, something that happens inside the hearer.”⁴²

The preacher-as-pastor approach was popularized by Harry Emerson Fosdick and precipitated a new perspective on preaching called the “therapeutic approach.”⁴³ Long explains what that change in emphasis meant to preaching in America.

The herald disdains communicational concerns and strategies for changing the hearers; the pastor specializes in them. The herald starts with the Bible as source; the pastor starts with the human dilemma as experienced by the hearer and turns to the Bible as resource. For the pastor, the primary question is not “What shall I say? But “What do I want to happen?”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid., 31.

⁴² Ibid., 31.

⁴³ Ibid., 31.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 32.

It is easy to see how the pastor image strives to accommodate the needs, perspectives, and values of the listener. And yet it is that strength that can become its Achilles heel. Focusing on the needs and circumstances of the people can unwittingly produce an anthropocentric message. When the focus becomes man as the listener then it can be tempting to shape the message into a word that will be palatable for the audience. That, of course, is a dangerous path and is a weakness that should be guarded against in the preacher-as-pastor image.

Both the herald image and the pastor image bring valuable insights to the preaching process. While both have their weaknesses they simultaneously contribute to an overall sensitivity to the Bible and contemporary society.

The third approach to preaching is an outgrowth of the herald and pastor image. Its emphasis is not primarily on *what* the focus should be as much as on *how* the message should be told. “This image differs from the previous two in that it tells us who the preacher is by describing how the preacher preaches: by telling stories.”⁴⁵

This approach to preaching naturally values the narrative form of communication. Long describes why proponents of this approach feel they have gleaned the strengths of both the preacher and pastor images.

Storytelling preachers do not choose the narrative form arbitrarily but because they believe that narrative is superior theologically and communicationally. Theologically narrative is superior because, at its base, the gospel itself is a narrative. One must finally respond to the question “What is the Christian faith?” by telling a story. “I believe in God,” we say. Which God? “Well, the one who

⁴⁵ Ibid., 36.

made heaven and earth, the God we meet in Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate....” and off we go narrating the essential story of the faith.⁴⁶

The narrative medium is important in the pastor as storyteller approach because it believes that storytelling gives proper shape to the incarnational word. That is to say that the message is fashioned not only by the word of God but by the shape in which that word arrives. The form of the message then, is a critical aspect of the message itself.

The images of herald, pastor, and storyteller are helpful metaphors in determining the nature of preaching. Drawing from the strengths of each approach a theology of preaching can be fashioned that gives priority to the word, sensitivity to the listener, and a desire to tell the story well. To these images Long adds yet another metaphor which he calls the “preacher as witness” approach.

Long cites Paul Ricoeur’s assessment of the strengths of the “preacher as witness” approach.

1. The witness is not a volunteer, not just anyone who comes forward to give testimony, but only the one who is sent to testify.
2. The testimony of the witness is not about the global meaning of human experience but about God’s claim upon life. It is Yahweh who is witnessed to in the testimony.
3. The purpose of the testimony is proclamation to all peoples. It is on behalf of the people, for their belief and understanding, that the testimony is made.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid., 36, 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 42, 43.

The testimony is not merely one of words but rather demands a total engagement of speech and action. The whole life of the witness is bound up in the testimony.

This summary of strengths highlights the tension between the primacy of the word and the context of the listener. The witness has his feet in two worlds; the world of the word and the world in which he lives. When he arrives at the preaching moment he tells what he has seen in language the listener can comprehend. In this process he is naturally bridging the gap between the eras and presenting his story. A story that derives its authority from the nature of its genesis.

In his book, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*, Long notes how easy it is for an individual to shape Scripture to his own liking. He observes that, “Fundamentalists, charismatics, social activists, feminists, evangelicals, traditionalists, liberationists—all of us, in fact—go to the texts of the Bible and return with trophies that are replicas of our own theological image. It is no easy task genuinely to listen to the voice of Scriptures rather than merely to hear the sound of our own echoes.”⁴⁸

Every person comes to the Bible with his own experience and theological lens. That’s why it is extremely important to acknowledge the many factors that influence the interpretation and preaching of a text. *The Witness of Preaching* is a thoughtful and provocative overview of these factors.

⁴⁸ Thomas Long, *Preaching And The Literary Forms Of The Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1989), 28.

The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching

In *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*, Keith Willhite expands on the big idea theme developed by Haddon Robinson in *Biblical Preaching*. His book is a collection of essays by contributors who have studied and embraced “Big Idea” preaching. It is an excellent treatment of the strengths and challenges of this approach to preaching.

Willhite notes that the hermeneutical questions at the foundation of “Big Idea” preaching are “(1) What is the text talking about (subject)? (2) What is the text saying about the subject (complement)?”⁴⁹ These two questions assist the preacher in getting at the truth of the text but they are refined when one approaches the Homiletical task. In that case the questions become: “(1) What am I talking about? (2) What am I saying about the subject?”⁵⁰ The rephrasing of the initial questions constitutes the bridge from the biblical context to the contemporary setting.

Another author, Duane Litfin, is a Big Idea preacher but also acknowledges the challenges encountered by this approach. He does an excellent job of discussing these problems in the chapter entitled “New Testament Challenges to Big Idea Preaching.” The issues he identifies are associated with the way the Bible is written; long sentences, unique genres of literature, and the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament sometimes make it difficult to identify a “Big Idea.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Keith Willhite, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁵¹ Ibid., 57-65.

The main thrust of Willhite's book is to help the big idea preacher connect the Bible to the people. Overall, it is successful in doing that and is a wonderful sequel to *Biblical Preaching* because it deals with some of the practical implications of the "Big Idea" process.

Homiletic

In *Homiletic*, David Buttrick compares preaching to taking a walk. "If we are going to take a walk, we do so in steps – one step after another. If we are going to talk of anything, we do so in words, one after another. Language is inescapably linear."⁵² From this premise he devotes his work to an analysis of the move process.

This book is rich with practical insights into the way people think and listen as it relates to preaching. An example of this is Buttrick's discussion of reflective consciousness. Reflective consciousness is that point in the conclusion of the sermon that a congregation reflectively considers the conclusion of the matter. During the majority of the sermon the congregation is on a journey from one idea to the next, everything is moving. But at the conclusion of the sermon the action stops. It is at this point that many listeners check out. They reach for the hymnal or bulletin when they hear such phrases as "Finally" or "And in conclusion."⁵³ Buttrick offers some tips on how to arrive at reflective consciousness without tipping off the congregation that the conclusion has arrived.

⁵² David Buttrick, *Homiletic* (Philadelphia, PA: Press, 1987), 23.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 101.

The book is lengthy but full of insight and challenge. It makes a strong contribution to the preacher who is learning more about communicating the word of God effectively.

Preaching

Preaching is a landmark book by Fred Craddock. Not only a gifted preacher but also a capable writer, Craddock probes the preaching experience and does a fine job of teaching a preacher how to think about preaching.

Like Robinson in *Biblical Preaching*, he devotes significant time to interpreting, or “exegeting,” the listener. He does this by describing an exercise that helps the preacher understand and identify with his listeners. He remarks that “It is an effort of the imagination to bring to a specific human condition all that a person has heard, seen, read, felt, and experienced about that condition.”⁵⁴

The exercise he suggests allows the preacher to make progress in understanding his congregation.

Take a blank sheet of paper and write at the top, “What’s It Like to Be?” Beneath that heading write a phrase descriptive of one concrete fact of human experience. Examples might be: “facing surgery,” “living alone,” “suddenly wealthy,” “rejected by a sorority,” “arrested for burglary,” “going into the military,” “fired from one’s position,” “graduating,” “getting one’s own apartment,” “unable to read,” “extremely poor,” “fourteen years old.” For the next fifteen minutes scribble on the page every thought, recollection, feeling, experience, name, place, sound, smell, or taste that comes to mind. The first few times may be slow and awkward, but it will not be long until the page fills easily and quickly. In fact you will be

⁵⁴ Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 96.

surprised how much the relaxed and free association will dredge up and cluster around a single instance of human experience.⁵⁵

At the end of this chapter he makes this concluding observation. “Whatever may be provided a preacher by any and all resources, it is only when local soil has been added that the sermon will take root and grow.”⁵⁶

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

Christ Centered Preaching

The message, whether proclaimed from a cathedral pulpit or whispered to a hopeless inmate is the same; Jesus saves. Preaching is simply an elaboration on that theme. It brings to light the story of salvation and reveals a God who loves sinners so much that he gave his only Son to die for them.

In *Christ Centered Preaching*, Bryan Chapell, reinforces the foundation of this message by documenting the integrity of the Bible. He observes that, “The Bible makes it clear that the Word is not merely powerful; it is without peer.”⁵⁷ He proceeds to identify five ways in which the Word has priority in preaching.

The Bible:

Creates: “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm” (Ps. 33:9)

⁵⁵ Ibid., 97.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 98.

⁵⁷ Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 18.

Controls: “He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down his hail like pebbles.... He sends his word and melts them....” (Ps. 147:15-18).

Persuades: “Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully...” declares the Lord. “Is not my word like fire,” declares the Lord, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:28-29).

Performs his purposes: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return to it without watering the earth, ...so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isa. 55:10-11).

Overrides human motives: While in prison the apostle Paul rejoices that when others preach the Word with “false motives or true” the work of God still moves forward (Phil. 1:18).⁵⁸

These observations confirm that the source and substance of preaching is the word of God. Priority one is a high regard for the Bible and closely related to this truth is the substance of the message. On this theme Paul was certain that preaching was not about him it was about God. “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

God fully manifests the dynamic power of his Word in the New Testament where he identifies his Son as the divine *Logos*, or Word (John 1:1). By identifying his Son as his Word, God reveals that his message and his person are inseparable. The Word

⁵⁸ Ibid., 18, 19.

embodies him. This is not to say that the letters and the paper of a Bible are divine, but that the truths Scripture holds are God's vehicle of his own spiritual activity.⁵⁹

Jesus Christ is the epicenter of all legitimate preaching. At the outset of his ministry he stood to read in the synagogue and from the Hebrew Scriptures proclaimed his own ministry. Quoting from Isaiah he offered himself as the good news of salvation. Binding wounds and freeing prisoners was the good news he preached. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

Preaching, for Jesus, was a declaration of himself and the message from the kingdom of God. He taught many dynamic truths but each one had Jesus Christ as its source and substance. When the pastor preaches, he too will explore numerous themes related to the gospel. And yet, in all his preaching, Jesus and Calvary will stand as the firm foundation of his message.

Preparing Expository Sermons

In *Preparing Expository Sermons*, Ramesh Richard examines the message of preaching by focusing on the development of a Central Point. His practical pointers include a helpful exercise that can test exegetical conclusions as the message is

⁵⁹ Ibid., 19.

developed. He recommends that the end of exegesis should be analyzed by a battery of questions because of the inherent dangers in Scriptural interpretation. These dangers are:

1. Misinterpretation: assigning the wrong meaning to a passage.
2. Subinterpretation: the failure to ascertain the full meaning of a passage.
3. Superinterpretation: attributing more significance to a passage than is actually implicit in it.⁶⁰
4. These dangers can be diminished if not avoided by applying the following tests:
 - a. ***The test of authenticity.*** Can you make a good case that your interpretation is authentic? That is, is your interpretation true to what the author meant when writing these words?
 - b. ***The test of unity.*** Is there unity of meaning between the terms, affirmations, and interpretation of the text? Is there a contradiction or discrepancy in your interpretation? For example, I once heard a sermon on 1John in which brother meant Christian in the first half and non-Christian in the second half of the sermon.
 - c. ***The test of consistency.*** Is your interpretation consistent with the rest of the chapter, book, and the entire Bible? Can you explain an apparent difficulty? For example, how do you explain Paul's giving Timothy permission to eat all meats in comparison with Old Testament prohibitions?
 - d. ***The test of simplicity.*** Is your interpretation simple or contrived? Plain or mystical? Easily stated and understood or heavily supported by allusions and concoctions of arguments?
 - e. ***The test of honesty.*** Have you been careful not to read yours or others' (e.g., your Bible teachers' or your denomination's) prejudgments and preconceptions into the text?⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 46.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

How to Read the Bible for All it's Worth

Another volume that addresses the message of preaching is *How to Read the Bible for All it's Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart. They put preaching on a firm foundation by reminding the preacher that his message must be based on two tasks; exegesis and hermeneutics.

Exegesis is the “leading out” of the textual meaning. “There are two basic kinds of questions one should ask of every biblical passage: those that relate to *content* and those that relate to *context*.”⁶² Hermeneutics is the next step in the process and covers the whole spectrum of interpretation but is generally used “in the narrower sense of seeking the contemporary relevance of ancient texts.”⁶³

Fee and Stewart offer interpretational guidelines for the various types of Scripture; the epistles, Old Testament narratives, gospels, parables, the law, the prophets, the psalms, and Revelation. These guidelines, carefully followed, will help prevent misinterpretation of the Bible. All of this adds up to a more objective approach to Bible study; setting aside preconceived notions and sectarian beliefs in order to determine the real truth of the Word.

⁶² Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 22.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 25.

Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible

Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible, by Thomas Long, nicely complements *How to Read the Bible for all it's Worth*. Like the latter it addresses the important issue of biblical interpretation; the careful process by which the Bible is analyzed and understood.

It helps a preacher identify literary and rhetorical considerations that have a bearing on interpretation. Long offers advice on how to preach proverbs, narratives, and other genres of scriptures. His work is critically important because human nature too easily interprets literature through its *own* experience and expectations. Preachers must consciously work against this inclination, aware that they are apt to miss the truth when blinded by their own baggage. Long aptly describes this phenomenon: “Fundamentalists, charismatics, social activists, feminists, evangelicals, traditionalists, liberationists—all of us, in fact—go to the texts of the Bible and return with trophies that are replicas of our own theological image. It is no easy task genuinely to listen to the voice of Scripture rather than merely to hear the sound of our own echoes.”⁶⁴

Biblical Sermons

Biblical Sermons, edited by Haddon Robinson, is a collection of sermons by noted preachers of the day and makes an important contribution to understanding the message

⁶⁴ Thomas Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 28.

of preaching. Robinson demonstrates that teaching preaching is more than communicating good theory; it is demonstrating good theory at work.

The sermons demonstrate sound exegetical, hermeneutical, and homiletical techniques that are remarkably effective. They show that a preacher can be interesting *and* true to the text. Of particular value are the commentary and interviews at the conclusion of each sermon. They help the learning preacher get inside the heads and hearts of experienced and successful preachers.

This book is a sequel to *Biblical Preaching* and serves as a “laboratory” of sermon development. Robinson purposely selected authors who are preaching pastors. He says that, “Since much of homiletics is more caught than taught, these ministers show us a specimen of the work they have done and thus let us glimpse how they work.”⁶⁵ And that is precisely the value of this volume. It give aspiring preachers an inside perspective on sermon development and how preachers think.

WHAT DOES PREACHING ACCOMPLISH?

360 Degree Preaching

The nature of this question leads one to consider the result of preaching. Time has proven that preaching makes the Word clear and calls people to action. It also reveals a

⁶⁵ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 9.

fresh picture of God and thus becomes a medium for change. This transformation is measured by decisions for Christ and changed lives.

Listeners who hear God's word and accept the gift of salvation are at the center of what preaching accomplishes. As they understand God and his will for them they are drawn by the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus as a personal Savior and experience his power in their life. Preaching then, clarifies the character of God and transforms the character of man.

In *360 Degree Preaching*, Michael Quicke captures this idea by stating that "God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – speaks through his Word and empowers the preacher and convicts the listeners and transforms the lives of the preacher and the listeners."⁶⁶

His view of preaching goes beyond the conventional idea of Scripture at one end of the spectrum and the listener at the other. He challenges the preacher to look all around him and discern the interface of God in culture and technology. He urges preachers to move out of their comfort zone. "Experimentation requires much of a preacher's vision, time, and courage. Some of us languish within our comfort zones...the future lies in new generations of preachers who have eyes wide open to the challenges of the twenty-first century and give their best within preaching's 360-degree dynamic."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Michael Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 49.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 121.

The value of this book is that it involves thinking. That is, thinking about preaching. Quicke develops his points by reasoning from cause to effect. This process causes the reader to carefully consider a more complete approach to preaching.

Preaching With Bold Assurance

In *Preaching With Bold Assurance*, Hershael York and Bert Decker offer practical advice on the delivery of the sermon. They carefully show how sermon delivery is crucial to accomplishing change in the listener.

They move beyond the celebrated virtues of preaching such as inspiration, entertainment, and motivation. And though they acknowledge these elements exist in preaching they maintain that good preaching accomplishes much more. A good message achieves what Paul shared with Timothy. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2Timothy 3:16). Here are listed the four purposes of Scripture. Of those four purposes only one is informational and three are directly applicational and exhortative.⁶⁸ This implies that preaching should not be drenched with data nor bathed in emotion. Rather, it should give both information and emotion to encourage and inspire obedience.⁶⁹ York makes this point well by offering this insight.

While it is a good thing to preach a great sermon, our goal should never be great sermons. The object of our preaching is to see God change the lives of our listeners by the Word that is preached. The sermon is merely God’s means (and

⁶⁸ Hershael York and Bert Decker, *Preaching With Bold Assurance* (New York, NY: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

therefore ours) to the ends of his purposes. Like the prophets and the apostles, we preach for a *decision*, not merely for information.⁷⁰

The Four Pages of the Sermon

In *The Four Pages of the Sermon* Paul Wilson analyzes the preaching process from a theological perspective. He does this by devising four theological foci that allow relevant theological discussion. “Page” is used, not as a literal page, but as a metaphor for theological function and appropriate creative endeavor. Four pages are four distinct moments of preaching.⁷¹

The pages on this theological journey through sermon preparation span the Bible story and the current human dilemma. In brief, here is Wilson’s sermon development system.

1. Page One – Examine trouble and conflict in Bible times.
2. Page Two – Examine similar sin or human brokenness in our time.
3. Page Three – Return to the Bible to identify what God is doing in or behind the biblical text as it opens the story of good news.
4. Page Four – Point to God graciously at work in our world, particularly in relationship to those situations named on Page Two.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁷¹ Paul Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 15.

⁷² Ibid., 16.

The Four Pages of the Sermon is an important work because it consistently draws the preacher back to a theocentric focus in preaching. Wilson takes this approach because he observes a great tendency to anthropocentric preaching; focusing on people more than God. This “you-do-it” preaching, as he calls it, is characterized by the words must, should, and have to, and is found in every theological camp and every denomination.⁷³

Careful attention to the concerns raised by Wilson will complement sermon development and ensure that preaching remains good news about *God*. While I prefer the Big Idea approach to sermon construction, this book will aid the preacher in remaining thoroughly theocentric in his preaching.

WHY TAKE A PREACHING SEMINAR TO THE PHILIPPINES?

The books in this section deal with culture and its influence. Every culture interprets and reinterprets the gospel according to its particular world view and experience. Climate, politics, geography, and other influences shape understanding and receptiveness to the gospel.

Creating Understanding

Creating Understanding, authored by Donald Smith, examines these concerns from a communication perspective and addresses the question; How does culture influence the communication process?

⁷³ Ibid., 159.

Smith looks at culture and communication in a way that broadens the perception and appreciation of the variables involved. An increased awareness of communication issues is important because pastors must give careful attention to the original language and intent of the Bible so they can accurately convey the message of Scripture.

Smith illustrates the complexities of communication by drawing this illustration from the English language. “Most languages have a word that is used to translate *bread*. But do the words carry the same package of experiences and function? Even in English, the word may mean a food that is eaten, or it may mean money.”⁷⁴

Closely related to language is the issue of cultural values. While God and the gospel do not change with time or place it is clear that cultures vary widely. And each culture brings to the sermon moment its own unique world view and values that the preacher should be aware of. To demonstrate this dynamic, Smith highlights some intriguing cultural distinctions that would impact the communication process in his discussion on “Beliefs: The Invisible Barrier.” In particular, he illustrates the issue by discussing how cultures value time.

The concept of time is understood and used differently. Asia is considered to be future-oriented; thus skilled artisans in that part of the world may spend years in masterful hand-carving of tough jade—not for immediate benefit, but as a lasting expression of beauty. In business, this future orientation is evident in willingness to accept long-delayed returns.

The United States is a present-oriented society, where efficiency is measured by production in the shortest possible time. Business profits must be rapid; even entertainment is fast-moving and assumes a short attention span.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Donald Smith, *Creating Understanding* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 241.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 262.

This book increases the reader's awareness of issues that have a direct bearing on communication. For this reason a teaching focus in the Philippines should be on a *method* of sermon development and not on an *interpretation* of Filipino culture. Shaping a message to meet their culture will be more effectively accomplished by a local pastor than by a North American visitor.

Culture Shift

David Henderson confines his discussion of culture to North America. In his book *Culture Shift*, he probes North American attitudes toward God and life. His analysis centers on how culture has adversely affected theology and the pulpit. His stinging commentary is sparked by a trip he took to Africa.

The seeds of this book were planted during two such experiences: a summer mission trip to West Africa and a year of study in Cambridge, England. Only after I was out of the United States and immersed in another culture for an extended time could I begin to see in a new way some of the things we take so much for granted.⁷⁶

In the aftermath of his adventure *Culture Shift* becomes a probing analysis of who we are and how we think. Henderson's commentary is an unflattering expose' of the American mind as it relates to faith and culture.

Though this book is primarily an analysis of North American culture it is helpful in this course because it provides important questions that should be asked of any culture. Certainly Filipinos are different than Americans but human beings still share common

⁷⁶ David Henderson, *Culture Shift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 17.

needs, faults, and emotions. The questions posed and the issues discussed in *Culture Shift* will assist any pastor who desires to understand the forces that shape his listeners.

HOW SHOULD A PREACHER APPROACH THE TASK OF PREACHING?

Public Speaking Handbook for Christians

The challenge of preaching has always been the task of bringing a faithful word from God to a contemporary audience. In his book *Public Speaking Handbook for Christians*, Duane Litfin meets this challenge by stating that the audience should shape every element of the speaking process. His call to an “audience-centered approach” means that the public speaking moment should be carefully observed from the perspective of the listener.

...taking an audience-centered approach simply means that we acknowledge that the audience must shape and influence every element of the speaking process if we are interested in communicating effectively. It means that we disallow the basically self-centered attitude which says, “If they want to understand, let them get on my wavelength. I’ve done my part if I merely give out the information.” Maintaining an audience-centered approach to public speaking means that we take upon ourselves as speakers the responsibility to do everything we can to promote effective communication by adjusting to our audience. We submit to what someone has called “the tyranny of the audience.” To be sure, more often than we like to think, our best efforts will still not be enough to achieve our goals entirely, but this will not be for a lack of trying.⁷⁷

The chapter, “*How to Analyze Your Task*,” is especially helpful in seeking to understand the audience. His discussion of cognitive-consistency in this chapter is

⁷⁷ Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking, A Handbook for Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 37.

especially insightful. For a pastor seeking to bring people to decision through preaching, it is invaluable information.

As One Without Authority

As One Without Authority is Fred Craddock's case for inductive preaching. He maintains that deductive movement (reasoning from general truth to particular application) is not as effective as inductive movement (reasoning from particular to general truth). He maintains his position by saying that:

...inductive movement in preaching corresponds to the way people ordinarily experience reality and to the way life's problems-solving activity goes on naturally and casually. It has been urged that this method respects rather than insults the hearers and that it leaves them the freedom and hence the obligation to respond. In addition, unfolding or unrolling the sermon in this fashion sustains interest by means of that anticipation built into all good narration.⁷⁸

Craddock has helped popularize inductive preaching by showing that it is easier to retain a listener's interest when reasoning from particular experience to general truth. Yet while this is true there is also great merit in deductive preaching and, practically speaking, most sermons become a fusion of both methods. The issues are complex and whatever one's persuasion, *As One Without Authority* is an excellent review of the merits and challenges of inductive preaching.

⁷⁸ Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 55.

The Passion Driven Sermon

While Craddock gives his attention to the inductive method Jim Shaddix, in *The Passion Driven Sermon*, focuses on the attitude of the preacher. It has been said that success in life is 10% what happens to you and 90% your *attitude* to what happens. So it is with preaching. The success of any preaching ministry is based on a proper approach or attitude toward the pulpit.

Shaddix urges the aspiring preacher to bring an attitude single to the glory of God. Only this approach, he maintains, will bring fire to the pulpit.

He bemoans the pragmatic fix-it messages that contemporary preachers are spitting out. He says that preaching has fallen into easy pragmatism; a pragmatism that is in stark contrast to the attitude of the apostle Paul.

Paul refused to stoop to such pragmatism in his preaching. He instead aimed high, determined by the very purpose of God in Christ. In the last phrase of this first paragraph in 1 Corinthians 2, he addressed the motive of preaching in a clear purpose clause indicated by the word “that” (1 Cor. 2:5). Although it is directly tied to the preceding verse, the purpose statement actually encompasses the preceding four verses as well as the thoughts at the end of the previous chapter. Everything Paul did in his preaching ministry was so that it might line up with the agenda of the ages—the glory of God!⁷⁹

Shaddix’s thoughts are a refreshing reminder that preaching is about God, not about us. Incorporating this truth into an approach to preaching is critical because it will bring appropriate saving passion to the sermon.

⁷⁹ Jim Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), p. 43.

Since preaching is a public event and the preacher a public figure it is a short step from the pulpit to pride. And pride can easily derail the most gifted preacher. Shaddix brings this point home by comparing the preacher to a turtle - a turtle on a fence post. He draws the illustration from a chapter in the experience of Alex Haley:

Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, had a picture in his office showing a turtle sitting on top of a fence. The picture was there to remind him of a lesson he learned earlier in his life: “If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help.” About the lesson Haley said, “Anytime I start thinking, ‘Wow isn’t this marvelous what I’ve done!’ I look at that picture and remember how this turtle—me—got up on that post.” Paul defined preaching in terms of a “turtle on the fence.” When people see a turtle on the fence, they begin to focus on the one who put him there. When Paul preached he wanted the faith with which people responded to be shackled to the power of God in Christ. That means He gets the glory!⁸⁰

This word picture captures the preaching moment. A man with all of his shortcomings and limitations is placed on a pedestal and lifted up for all to see and hear. In his elevated position he will be tempted to harbor an inflated opinion of himself but he must always remember that his position is a gift from God. He didn’t climb up on his own, God placed him there for a reason. He placed him there to turn listening hearts to God. This truth reminds every preacher that the goal of preaching, the approach to preaching, and the theology of preaching is as simple and sophisticated as the call of that old gospel song, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.”

⁸⁰ Ibid., 46.

Chapter 4: PREACHING WITH PURPOSE

This course is designed to enhance a pastor's skills in developing the big idea for an expository sermon. The principles and methods that follow will assist a pastor in the most visible and influential moment of his pastoral life; preaching in the pulpit. The lessons are designed to be lecture based with classroom exercises that follow. The ideal class size would be four to eight students.

This seminar was taught in the Philippines to Filipino pastors and seminarians. Though there are differences in the American way of life compared to the Filipino culture, Filipinos are favorable to the west and many of them speak English. English speaking teachers are welcomed by Filipino pastors and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Preaching is valued in the Philippines and education regarding the practice of expository preaching enhances the witness of the gospel in that country; and it is expository preaching that will be the substance of this course. Its practice has established it as a reliable method of communicating the gospel and placed it in a respected position among evangelical pastors.

Expository preaching is a systematic endeavor to rightly divide the word of truth and one of the ablest proponents and practitioners of expository preaching, Dr. Haddon

Robinson of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has developed a working definition of expository preaching.

“Expository preaching...

- is the communication of a biblical concept,
- derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context,
- which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher,

then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”⁸¹

The theological portion of this project deals with the who, what, why, when, and where of preaching the gospel. This chapter is a further development of the preaching task by asking the question, *How* does a pastor develop the big idea of an expository sermon?

In particular this seminar will endeavor to teach a pastor how he can find and develop a big idea for preaching. This course will not attempt to address sermon form, introductions, conclusions, and delivery. All of the above are important to the development of an authentic biblical sermon but will not be included in the scope of this project.

⁸¹ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

Rather, this course will focus on the hard work of developing the big idea. This big idea is the guiding force of the entire sermon and no amount of eloquence can compensate for its absence. An extra portion of eloquence will not clarify a murky premise. Taking time to invest in the big idea process will provide a sound launching pad for the sermon.

Since this course is conducted over a period of two days the goals and objectives center on knowledge and comprehension. In addition to a knowledge and comprehension of the big idea process the student will be able accomplish one main task; derive a subject, complement, and big idea from a gospel parable.

COURSE OUTLINE

DAY 1	DAY 2
1) Introduction to the course ➤ 8:30 – 9:15 am - 45 Minutes 2) The importance of a Big Idea ➤ 9:30 – 10:30 am - 1 hour 3) Study the passage ➤ 10:45- 12 - 1.25 hour <p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH</p> 4) Determine the subject and complement ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours 5) State the Big Idea ➤ 3:00 – 4:30 pm - 1.5 hours	6) Explaining the Big Idea ➤ 8:30-9:30 am 1 hour 7) Proving the Big Idea ➤ 9:45 – 10:45 am - 1 hour 8) Applying the Big Idea ➤ 11:00 – 12 - 1 hour <p style="text-align: center;">LUNCH</p> 9) Giving purpose to the Big Idea ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours

STEP 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

8:30- 9:15 AM

Notes to the teacher:

The teacher of this course must be clear in the task the student will be able to perform as each session is introduced. At the end of each lesson it is important to synthesize and restate the lessons learned and listen to the student responses.

This two day course contains nine segments. Over the course of two days it should be possible to cover the material and engage the students in a way that will enhance their preaching skills.

To begin the class, invite the students to tell about a memorable preacher or a memorable sermon - one who moved them as a child or influenced them as a young adult; a preacher who captured their imagination and brought them closer to God. Among other things ask them why they admired that particular preacher or remembered that particular sermon.

Preacher questions:

- What was it about his preaching that drew you to him?
- Did you know him personally?
- If so, what was he like during the week?
- Was he dynamic?

- Was he spiritual?
- Was he a man of prayer?
- Did he tell good stories?
- Did he talk about his own experiences?
- Was he eloquent?

What lessons can be drawn from your favorite preacher? Was he a student of the Word? What was his character outside the pulpit?

Sermon Questions:

- Was it short? Long?
- What was it about?
- Is there a story you remember?
- Were you at a receptive point in your life?
- Were you a child? Young adult?

What lessons can be drawn from our favorite sermons? How does your favorite sermon influence the way you preach?

STEP 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF A BIG IDEA

9:30-10:30 AM

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- Explain the value of the Big Idea in preaching.

Preaching sermons is a demanding task but listening to sermons can be just as challenging. How many times have you left church wondering what the preacher was talking about? Probably, too often.

That's why it's important for a preacher to be clear in his presentation. He needs to remember that his listeners probably won't remember a laundry list of good points but they might hang on to one *great* point.

And that's what the Big Idea premise is all about; one great point. Or rather, the great point of the passage being preached. It is this one point – sometimes called the central ideal, proposition, theme, thesis statement, main thought – that should flow from the message. This one thought should capture the truth of the passage and the heart of the listener.

A sermon with two or three good ideas is really three sermons. Mining for the big idea allows the preacher to sift through the good ideas and focus on the main point of the passage. Having determined this main point, or big idea, he will develop his sermon in a way that explains, proves, or applies the big idea to his listeners.

Spending time with the big idea at the outset of sermon preparation will give the message a steady path to the heart of the listener. It is essential that a sermon be the embodiment of a single idea. Haddon Robinson makes this point by referencing J.H. Jowett in his Yale lectures on preaching:

I have a conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express it's theme in a short pregnant sentence as clear as a crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting and the most fruitful labor in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness – this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon: and I do not think any sermon ought to be preached or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon.⁸²

Since no sermon is ready for preaching until it can be expressed in a crystal clear sentence it is critically important to discover a central idea. The sermon must settle on one overarching concept or it becomes confusing.

The goal of preaching “comment on the words of a passage,” or to “explain the phrases,” but instead to arrive at a single idea, or point, or truth. This one truth will stick to the heart and mind of the listener .

⁸² Ibid., 37

Defining an Idea:

What is an idea? Dr. Robinson has said that, “An idea is a distillation of life that abstracts out of the particulars of experience what they have in common and relates them to each other.”⁸³

What the Big Idea IS NOT.

- The Big Idea is not a single word - “forgive,” “Pharisee”
- The Big Idea is not a topic - “forgiveness,” “mercy,” “pride”

What the Big Idea IS.

- **This Big Idea is the sermon in a nutshell.** It is not necessarily a summary of all the main points of the message. Rather, it represents the dominant thrust of the message; the thing you want the listener to remember even if he forgets everything else. It’s the “take-home truth.”
- This Big Idea is sometimes referred to as the central truth, the thesis, the summary sentence, the unifying concept, or the proposition.
- The listener reaches in his mind for overall unity so the sermon must not be disconnected truths, fragments, or unrelated ideas.⁸⁴

At this point the instructor should deliver a two minute talk of good but unrelated ideas and follow it with two questions. What was the subject? What was being said about the subject? This will illustrate how important it is for a speaker to know his subject and what he is saying about it.

Duane Litfin notes that the human mind craves for unity, order and progress.

Every listener is trying to make sense out of the sermon. Throughout the sermon a

⁸³ Haddon Robinson, *Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary D. Min. Course Notes*, (2004), 1.

⁸⁴ Don Sunukjian, *Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary D. Min. Course Notes*, (2004), 20.

listener is trying to bring order to the sermon even if the speaker isn't. That is why Litfin observes that, "Having a central idea tends to build unity into a speech, allowing us to work in conjunction with the natural tendencies of our listeners' minds."⁸⁵

Keith Willhite develops this idea further by saying that, "Our propensity toward unity makes trying to have more than one point (buckshot) like having no point at all."⁸⁶ He illustrates the concept with some narration from the musical, *The Point*.

Oblio and his dog, Arrow are banished to the Pointless Forest where all things are pointless. There they meet the Pointless Man, or the Pointed Man, depending on your point of view. You see, the Pointless Man had a point. In fact he had hundreds of them. But as he so quickly pointed out, "A point in every direction is the same as no point at all."⁸⁷

Making a single point well makes the preaching moment enjoyable for the listeners and allows them to "make sense" out of what the preacher was saying. Understanding this guiding principle is foundational for preaching success.

Now that you know what a big idea is, the next step in the big idea process involves passage selection. Identifying a complete unit of Scripture is important because it preserves the integrity of the message. Snatching a verse or phrase from the Bible can lead to misguided conclusions.

⁸⁵ Litfin, 76.

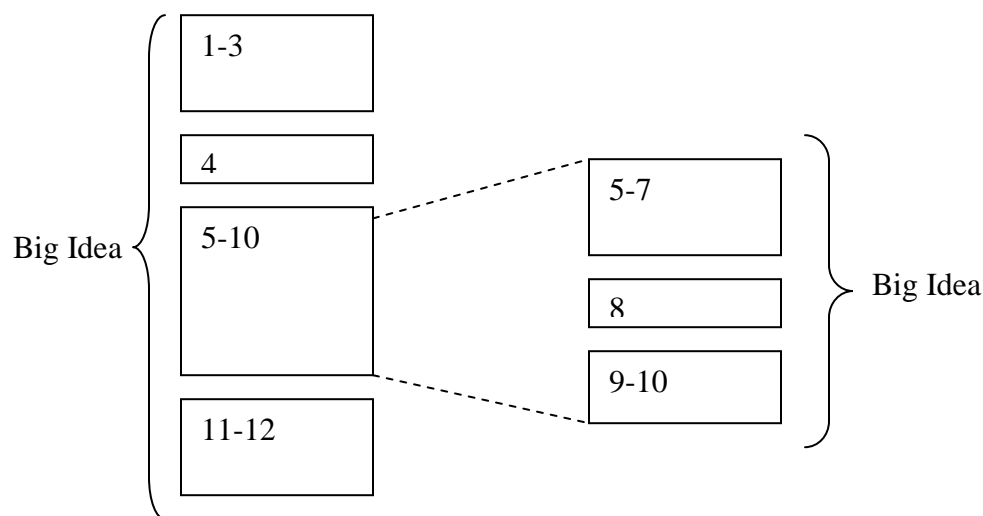
⁸⁶ Willhite, 21.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

When a sermon is being developed The Big Idea will be determined by the unit of Scripture being preached. A sermon preached on a larger unit of Scripture will have a different Big Idea than a sermon that would be preached on a verse or two pulled from that same unit. See the illustration below.

The point is this: Develop the Big Idea of your sermon based on the text you are preaching. This seminar will focus on developing a big idea from the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) along with exercises from the epistles and other Scripture passages.

A subordinate idea in a larger passage may become the Big Idea in a smaller passage as shown by the illustration below.⁸⁸



⁸⁸ Sunukjian, 21.

The process of discovering the Big Idea requires careful thinking in the selection and interpretation of the passage of Scripture. Some preachers have called this aspect of sermon preparation the most difficult of the entire sermon preparation process. Dr.

Robinson articulates the challenge of working through the idea process. He says that,

Ideas sometimes lurk in the attic of our minds like ghosts. At times we struggle to give these wispy ideas a body. “I know what I mean,” we say, “but I just can’t put it into words.” Despite the difficulty of clothing thought with words, we have to do it. Unless ideas are expressed in words, we cannot understand, evaluate, or communicate them. If we will not – or cannot – think ourselves clear so that we say what we mean, we have no business in the pulpit. We are like a singer who can’t sing, an actor who can’t act, or an accountant who can’t add.⁸⁹

In summary, the Big Idea is the dominant thrust of the message; it is the one idea you want the listener to remember even if he forgets everything else. It’s the “take-home truth.”

⁸⁹ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 40, 41.

STEP 3

STUDYING THE PASSAGE

10:45- 12 NOON

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- 1) Define a balanced approach to Bible study.
- 2) State the two primary observation tasks in Bible study.

Preaching begins with the Bible. It is God's word to us and the preacher's task is to rightly represent that Word. Careful attention to the study of the Bible will produce a message that is consistent with God's plan for the salvation of man.

Sound Bible study methods are a sure foundation for discovering the Big Idea and developing it into a sermon. And the process that follows will teach a pastor to discover the Big Idea of a sermon.

This method will be modeled by applying the Big Idea principles to Luke 18:9-14, the story of the two worshippers (the Pharisee and the Tax Collector) who went to the temple to pray. While this passage is a parable, a unique type of biblical literature, the basic principles taught in this seminar can be applied to any Scripture passage.

Luke 18:9-14, NIV

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹ The **Pharisee** stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector.

¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ “But the **tax collector** stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The first task of the preacher is to:

1. Read the specific passage and the surrounding context in English.

- From the surrounding context, determine the author's flow of thought. This particular passage from Luke is a parable and parables need special consideration.
- Luke 18:9-14 is a story about two men coming to God.
- The **immediate context** is Jesus addressing his words to “some who were confident of their own righteousness.” vs. 9
- The **larger context** is a series of parables, miracles, and stories in chapter 18 that highlight varying attitudes of those who came to Jesus (or the kingdom of God).
 - (a) The Persistent Widow – vs. 1-8
 - (b) The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector – vs. 9-14
 - (c) The Little Children and Jesus – vs. 15-17
 - (d) The Rich Ruler – vs. 18-30
 - (e) Jesus Again Predicts His Death – vs. 31-34
 - (f) A Blind Beggar Receive His Sight – vs. 35-43

2. Observe Words.

Use your skills and resources in the original language to work your way through the vocabulary, word-order, and structural connections. In *Preparing Expository Sermons*, Dr. Ramesh Richard offers a helpful study process that will assist the student in determining the Big Idea of the passage.

He divides this study process into “seeing and seeking,” or “observing and questioning.” Throughout this process of study we are looking for the *ideas* that the author is communicating. The details should always be viewed with an eye to the overall gist of the passage.

- A student should study word meanings in dictionaries, Bible dictionaries, or encyclopedias, and study their usage from entries in concordances and marginal references.
- In Luke 18:9-14 we would want to learn about “Pharisees,” “tax collectors,” “mercy,” “justified,” “exalted.”

What did these words mean then?

What do they mean now?

How have these words been used elsewhere in Luke? In the gospels? In the Bible?

Other word studies can also be helpful. For example, the NIV says the “Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself.” The Greek word *pros* is translated ‘about’ by the NIV but it actually has the force of ‘to.’ In other words, the Bible is saying that the Pharisee wasn’t praying to God, he was praying to himself!

3. Observe Relationships.

Reflect on the specific passage, noting special questions or observations for further study. Ask questions people might ask as they read the text such as, “To whom was Jesus speaking?”

Parables lend themselves to misinterpretation because of the tendency to find “hidden” meanings in the passage. But they were really designed to be understood by the people who wanted to understand their meaning. Jesus addressed the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector to those who were confident of their own righteousness. Luke 18:9. He had a specific audience in mind and they knew who they were. They didn’t necessarily like or accept the message of the parable but the meaning was unmistakable.

In *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart discuss the issues related to a study and interpretation of the parables of Jesus. They make the point that Jesus “told parables to people.”⁹⁰

The most important element of understanding a parable is to appreciate the immediate setting in which it was told. “One of the keys to understanding them (parables) lies in discovering the original audience to whom they were spoken.”⁹¹

⁹⁰ Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 136.

⁹¹ Ibid., 137.

While a parable may seem like a mystery to 21st century readers we must remember that, “Jesus was not trying to be obtuse; he fully intended to be understood. Our task is first of all to try to hear what they heard.”⁹²

In the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector we need to understand that Jesus addressed the parable to people who were confident of their own righteousness. Other gospel parables were variously directed to the lost and discouraged, those who lacked faith, and those who needed to understand the nature of the kingdom of God. But this parable, Luke 18:9-14, was tailored for those who had more faith in their own works than in God’s righteousness and mercy.

Understanding relationships in the biblical society is crucial to understanding the gospel parables. A clear picture at this level will enable the preacher to more accurately preach the message and apply it to the modern listener.

4. Consult good commentaries.

Synthesis – *Tyndale, Bible Expositor*, etc.
 Exegetical- *The Word, Anchor, NICT, NICOT*
 Homiletic- Sermons in print, illustration books, etc.

5. Consider application answers as you study.

It is important to remember that application should be the last endeavor. Of first importance is a study of the text to learn what it meant to the original audience. Moving

⁹² Ibid., 137.

to application too early can short circuit the study process and impose conclusions and applications that were not intended by the biblical author.

Nevertheless, there are issues about your audience and the application of your sermon to that audience that should be in the background of your thinking. For a further look into these issues see Appendix A, “Where are they coming from?” and Appendix B, “Moving from an abstract concept to a real life situation.”

STEP 4

DETERMINE THE SUBJECT AND COMPLEMENT

1:15 – 2:45 PM

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- Define in their own words the following terms: Subject, Complement
- Identify the Subject and the Complement of a text.

At the heart of the Big Idea approach is the premise that every idea has two parts. These parts are the **Subject** and the **Complement**. Subject and Complement can be defined as follows:

The **subject** is the question.

“The subject is the complete, definite answer to the question,
“What am I talking about?””

The **complement** is the answer.

The complement is the answer to the question,
“What exactly am I saying about what I’m talking about?””

Note that every sentence in English is an idea/truth, having both a subject and a complement. All the points and sub-points of an outline are ideas or statements, each containing its own **subject** and **complement**.⁹³

⁹³ Sunukjian, 21.

In order to form the Big Idea you must first determine the narrow, specific topic of the sermon. An initial study and outlining of the passage will yield the “broad” topic – e.g. “pride.” But this is too general of a topic. The sermon could conceivably cover such diverse concepts as: “anger,” “fear,” “hope,” “love,” “pride,” “grace.”

To arrive at the exact, narrow topic of a sermon, follow these steps:

Determine from the outline flow what the author is “talking about.” This will give you a **“noun phrase,”** which is the broad topic.

- “pride”
- “grace”
- “justification”

Then, assume the biblical author is addressing a question about the broad topic. What is the question? In other words, **turn the “noun phrase” into an “interrogative question.”** This will give you the narrower more specific topic.

- If ‘falling to pride’ is the subject the question would be:
How can we defend against pride?
- If the subject is ‘praying for salvation’ the question would be:
How should we pray for salvation?

This “question” can then be turned back into an **“incomplete sentence”** to which you can add the assertion.

- The way to defend against pride is to...
- The way to pray for salvation is to...

The **“answer”** to the question, or the completing of the sentence, becomes the **complement**, thus forming the Big Idea.⁹⁴ For example:

- The way to defend against pride is to...recognize your sinfulness.
- The way to pray for salvation is to...plead for mercy.

Narrowing the topic by putting it in the form of a question will lead you to discover/test the exact complement and Big Idea of the author.

- Suggest a “broad” topic, and the assertions that could go with it.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 22.

- Narrow that broad topic by putting it in the form of a question, and note which of the assertions are still valid.⁹⁵

Note that the “question” should not lead to a Yes/No answer.

“Does God approve of pride?” Of course, the answer is no. Such Yes/No questions are not finding a Big Idea, they are simply asking for an affirmation or denial of an already assumed Big Idea.

Instead, the question should begin with one of the interrogatives:

- **Who, what, when, where, why, and how?** The following rhyme from *Biblical Preaching* is helpful in lodging these questions in your mind.

“I have six honest friends, they taught me all I knew.
Their names are WHAT and WHY and WHEN, and
HOW and WHERE and WHO.”⁹⁶

- “What prayer does God desire?”
- This can be turned into an incomplete sentence, to which you can add the complement and form the Big Idea.
- “The prayer God desires is ...a prayer for mercy.”

The reason this question/answer approach works is because underneath every statement or assertion of fact, or paragraph of information, there is an assumed question.⁹⁷

For example: “Class begins at 9:30 a.m.”

- Question: “When does class begin?”
- Incomplete sentence: “Class begins at...”
- Complement (answer): “Class begins at 9:30 a.m.”

Underneath every biblical passage or unit of scripture, there is some “need to know” that the author is meeting, some assumed “question” for which he is supplying the answer.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector there are special considerations to make as the preacher searches for that “need to know” truth. Fee and Stewart highlight some of these principles.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 22,23.

⁹⁶ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 66.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 23.

- The function of the parable was to call forth a response from the listener.
- Like a good joke, the parable was immediately understood by the listeners.
- The challenge for the preacher then, is to recapture the “punch line” of the parable so it has an impact in a contemporary setting.⁹⁸

What should also be noted are the “points of reference” in the parable. In the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector the self-righteous listener would identify with the Pharisee and the social outcast would identify with the Tax Collector. The message was not always accepted but the message was always clear.

According to Fee and Stewart a parable should first be understood in its biblical context. In other words, research the attitudes and feelings of the first century audience. After that is done, the remaining challenge for the preacher is to “Translate that same point into our own context.”⁹⁹

One final point should be made regarding the study and interpretation of parables. All of them are related to the fact that in some way they were vehicles, proclaiming the kingdom. Therefore it is necessary to understand the meaning of the kingdom in the ministry of Jesus. Those who are trying to secure their lives by possessions urgently need to hear the word of impending judgment, and the lost desperately need to hear the Good News.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Fee and Stewart, 138.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 146

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 148.

The above guidelines will help the preacher understand and correctly interpret the parables so that he will arrive at the intended message for the modern listener. Biblical interpretation is hard work and parables are challenging.

Since a pastor's preaching includes more than parable passages a general exercise in *Biblical Preaching* will help the student develop skill in identifying the subject and complement.¹⁰¹ A few other examples have been added to complete the list below. Work through the following subject/complement exercise with the students but do not yet go to the Big Idea exercise. That will happen in the next session.

Follow these guidelines for this exercise:

- Use an English translation.
- Do not use detailed exegetical work.
- Phrase the statements in either the language of the passage or in timeless language.
- The subject may be in the form of a question or an incomplete sentence.

1) A good sermon leaves you wondering how the preacher knew all about you.

Subject: What is the test of a good sermon?

Complement: It reveals what you are.

2) My car is reliable transportation.

Subject: What is reliable transportation?

Complement: My car is reliable transportation.

¹⁰¹ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 47-50.

**3) The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside,' or 'I will be slain in the streets.'
(Proverbs 22:13)**

Subject: How does the sluggard get out of work?

Complement: He makes excuses.

4) Today's pulpit has lost its authority because it has largely ignored the Bible as the source of its message.

Subject: Why has the modern pulpit lost its authority?

Complement: It has ignored the Bible.

5) The young have lots of time and few memories while the elderly have lots of memories and little time.

Subject: How do the young and old differ in their memories and their time?

Complement: The young have few memories and lots of time while the elderly have lots of memories and little time.

6) Attention teenagers: If you are tired of being hassled by unreasonable parents, now is the time for action. Leave home now and pay your own way while you still know everything.

Subject: What should dissatisfied teenagers do?

Complement: Go it on their own if they think they know everything.

**7) Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
(Matthew 7:21)**

Subject: Who enters the kingdom of heaven?

Complement: Those who do the will of the Father.

**8) Remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'
(Ecclesiastes 12:1)**

Subject: When should you think about God?

Complement: While you are young think about God.

- 9) Do not speak harshly to a man older than yourself, but advise him as you would your own father; treat the younger men as brothers and older women as you would your mother. Always treat younger women with propriety, as if they were your sisters. (1 Timothy 5:1-3)**

Subject: How should we relate to others as we minister to them?

Complement: Treat them as you would members of your own family.

- 10) Blessed is the person whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the person whose sin the Lord does not count against him, And in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1,2)**

Subject: Who is a blessed person?

Complement: The honest individual whose sin the Lord has forgiven

- 11) To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14)**

Subject: What does pride do?

Complement: Pride blinds a person to their true condition.

After the completion of this exercise review the principles that have been learned to reinforce the concepts.

- Every idea has two parts: Subject and Complement
- Study the passage to determine the broad topic.
- Narrow the topic by asking, “What is the author talking about?”
(Subject)

- Turn this narrower topic into a question. (Who, what, why, when, where, how)
- Turn the question into an incomplete sentence.
- Answer the question with the specific assertion posed by the author of the passage.
- “What exactly is the author saying about what he is talking about?”
(Complement)

STEP 5**STATE THE BIG IDEA****1:15 – 2:45 1.5 HOURS****Performance Objectives:**

The student will be able to...

- State the Big Idea of Luke 18:9-14

The process of stating the Big Idea will likely uncover many assertions that could be made about the text. As you work your way through the passage the Big Idea will become apparent. In the story of the Pharisee and the Publican here are some questions that might be raised:

- Where does pride come from?
- How should a Christian pray?
- What is justification?

One of these questions will emerge as the Big Idea and the other questions will likely be sub points of a sermon dealing with pride. The Big Idea of this parable seems to center on pride. And more specifically, how pride prevents one from experiencing salvation. This means that some of the other questions, or sub points could be:

- What is justification? Or How should a Christian pray?

Note: To settle on the Big Idea, decide which of these questions is the larger, more climactic one. Which question either contains or dominates the others? This question becomes the **subject** and its answer becomes the **complement** of the message – the truth the writer wanted to be remembered.¹⁰²

This section includes exercises that should be done in class. The best way to develop the skill of finding the big idea is to work through biblical passages as a group. The hard work of finding the subject and complement was done in the earlier session. Now it is time to put it all together and state the Big Idea.

- In some cases the Big Idea will simply be an adding-together of your first two lines. In other cases, it will be a smoother sentence which expresses the first two lines in more natural English.¹⁰³

Help the students succeed by starting simple and getting more complex. The following exercises have been gathered from class notes and from exercises in *Biblical Preaching*, pages 48, 49.

Build on the previous session by reviewing the examples below. In the previous hour the students have determined the subject and the complement, now it is time to state the Big Idea. As the students will soon see, the Big Idea is simply the combination of the subject and the complement. The complement is the answer to the question posed by the subject.

1) A good sermon leaves you wondering how the preacher knew all about you.

Subject: What is the test of a good sermon?

Complement: It reveals what you are.

¹⁰² Sunukjian, 23-26.

¹⁰³ Sunukjian, 27.

Big Idea: The test of a good sermon is that it reveals who you are.

2) My car is reliable transportation.

Subject: What is reliable transportation?

Complement: My car is reliable transportation.

Big Idea: My car is reliable transportation.

3) The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside,’ or ‘I will be slain in the streets.’ (Proverbs 22:13)

Subject: How does the sluggard get out of work?

Complement: He makes excuses.

Big Idea: The sluggard gets out of work by making excuses.

4) Today’s pulpit has lost its authority because it has largely ignored the Bible as the source of its message.

Subject: Why has the modern pulpit lost its authority?

Complement: It has ignored the Bible.

Big Idea: The modern pulpit has lost its authority because it has ignored the Bible

5) The young have lots of time and few memories while the elderly have lots of memories and little time.

Subject: How do the young and old differ in their memories and their time?

Complement: The young have few memories and lots of time while the elderly have lots of memories and little time.

Big Idea: The old and the young differ in that the young have few memories and lots of time while the elderly have lots of memories and little time.

- 6) **Attention teenagers: If you are tired of being hassled by unreasonable parents, now is the time for action. Leave home now and pay your own way while you still know everything.**

Subject: What should dissatisfied teenagers do?

Complement: Go it on their own if they think they know everything.

Big Idea: My car is reliable transportation.

- 7) **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)**

Subject: Who enters the kingdom of heaven?

Complement: Those who do the will of the Father.

Big Idea: Those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven.

- 8) **Remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you say, 'I find no pleasure in them.' (Ecclesiastes 12:1)**

Subject: When should you think about God?

Complement: While you are still young.

Big Idea: You should think about God while you are young.

- 9) **Do not speak harshly to a man older than yourself, but advise him as you would your own father; treat the younger men as brothers and older women as you would your mother. Always treat younger women with propriety, as if they were your sisters. (1 Timothy 5:1-3)**

Subject: How should we relate to others as we minister to them?

Complement: Treat them as you would members of your own family.

Big Idea: As you minister to others, you should treat them as you would your own family.

10) Blessed is the person whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the person whose sin the Lord does not count against him, And in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1,2)

Subject: Who is a blessed person?

Complement: The honest individual whose sin the Lord has forgiven.

Big Idea: A blessed person is the honest individual whose sin the Lord has forgiven.

11) To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:9-14)

Subject: What does pride do?

Complement: Pride blinds a person to their true condition.

Big Idea: People miss out on being justified because pride blinds them to their real condition and as a result they miss out on being justified.

As in the previous session, review the steps in the big idea process. This review will fix the big idea principles in the students mind. At the end of the review refer the students to the table in Appendix C (“Developing the Big Idea”) for further study. This will help them visualize how the Big Idea is eventually transformed into a sermon.

- Every idea has two parts: Subject and Complement
- Study the passage to determine the broad topic.
- Narrow the topic by asking, “What is the author talking about?” (Subject)

- Turn this narrower topic into a question. (Who, what, why, when, where, how)
- Turn the question into an incomplete sentence.
- Answer the question with the specific assertion posed by the author of the passage.
- “What exactly is the author saying about what he is talking about?” (Complement)
- The Big idea is the combination of the subject and the complement. Combine the answer to the question in a complete sentence.

STEP 6

EXPLAINING THE BIG IDEA

8:30 – 9:30 A.M.

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- Apply the first developmental question, “What needs to be explained?” to a Big Idea.

I have a Big idea now what do I do with it? What’s next? The answer to this question involves three questions that will help you develop your Big Idea. There are three questions because there are only three things that can be done to “develop” any given idea or statement.¹⁰⁴ The idea can be explained, proven, or applied.

As these three things are done the sermon begins to take shape. This lesson will focus on the first question which deals with UNDERSTANDING. In order to be clear in your presentation it is important to ask yourself the following question: **“What do I need to explain?”**

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 29.

Probe this area in terms of what the author is doing in the text, but most of all **ask the question in terms of the needs of your listeners.**¹⁰⁵

Probing the first Developmental Question.

UNDERSTANDING: What do I need to explain?

The question can be directed one of two ways. The first way is:

1. Toward the Bible

- Is the author of the passage developing his thought primarily through explanation?
- Does the author assume his audience has understanding of the subject?
- Is explanation needed, even though the author doesn't explain?

Below is a passage from Corinthians that would need some explanation to a 21st century audience. The diversity in the early church was designed to enrich it not tear it apart so Paul used the analogy of the body to illustrate how all the gifts of the spirit working together can make the church strong.

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:11-12).

Throughout 1 Corinthians 12 Paul is comparing and contrasting spiritual gifts, the human body, and the church. By drawing an analogy from life he explains the beauty of diversity and its necessity in developing the ministry of the church. He is not reasoning from cause to effect nor is he trying to prove that people have bodies. No, he is simply explaining what he means when he says the church is a body. And once he is done

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 30.

explaining the truth is clear and the application is easy. By way of explanation Paul makes his spiritual point.

When writing to Titus about the qualifications of a church leader, Paul, again, did a lot of explaining.

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (Titus 1:5-9).

These passages illustrate how Paul develops his idea through explanation. The preacher will also want to ask himself if there are concepts the Bible writer assumes his audience understands but that the modern listener wouldn't. This brings us to the next step; What needs to be explained to the audience?

2. What do I need to explain to the Audience?

In other words, are there elements in the passage that the Biblical writer takes for granted that my audience needs explained to them?¹⁰⁶ Above all else be clear in your explanation. As Napoleon said to his generals; **“Be clear! Be clear! Be clear!”**

A passage that begs for explanation is the one found in 1 Corinthians 8. Here we find that food sacrificed to idols was a hot topic in the early church. It generated a lot of

¹⁰⁶ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 78.

concern and confusion for the believers in Paul's day. In 1 Corinthians 8 he addresses the problem in a passage where he mentions "the weaker brother."

But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall (1 Corinthians 8:8-13).

Dr. Robinson explains how meat offered to idols was as familiar to his readers as shopping centers are to modern audiences. But today, people are as bewildered about the practices of idolatry as a Corinthian would be in a supermarket.

What this means is that "food sacrificed to idols" needs some explaining. If it is not explained then it could be misunderstood or misapplied. The listener needs to enter into the psychological, emotional, and spiritual tensions posed by eating meat previously offered in sacrifice to heathen gods.

Robinson goes on to demonstrate this point by citing Paul's reference to the "weak brother." Paul is not referring to someone who is easily tempted to sin. Instead, he has in mind an over-scrupulous Christian who has not applied theology to experience.

The weak Christian does not fully appreciate that "no idol is anything in the world," but is only a creation of superstition. In modern churches, therefore many over-scrupulous people who consider themselves "strong" would, in Paul's mind, be "weak." In a treatment of this passage, therefore, what Paul took for granted with his readers requires extensive explanation today.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 79.

In summary, the question of explanation deals with the passage and the people.
Through explanation the preacher builds a bridge from Bible times to modern listeners.

STEP 7

PROVING THE BIG IDEA

9:45 – 10:45 AM

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- Apply the second developmental question, “Do we believe it?” to a Big Idea.

After asking what needs to be explained the preacher needs to address the question of BELIEF. This question can be variously phrased.

- Do we believe it?
- Is it true?
- Why is this statement true?
- What is the connection?
- Why does the cause-effect relationship hold true?
- What could come up to cause my listeners not to accept or act on this statement?
- Do I need to prove or defend this?

BELIEF: Do I believe it?

1. The author may be defending/proving/arguing something which your audience already accepts (e.g. the deity of Christ, the resurrection).
2. The author may be defending/proving/arguing something which your audience does ***not*** already accept, and therefore needs his argument.

3. The author may not be proving his point, but your audience may need some defense or evidence of why this is true, some explanation that this is actually so (e.g. the humanity of Christ, the existence of demons and the reality of spiritual warfare).

VALIDITY: What do I need to prove?

Avoid the temptation to ignore this step. A lot of people think you can skip this step. But not everyone will think that every statement from the Bible is true. For example, we may say that pride is harmful but aren't we supposed to be proud of our accomplishments? But aren't we supposed to take pride in our appearance? These questions need to be addressed and there are three avenues you can appeal to for the support of your Big Idea.

➤ **Appeal to Scripture.** For example:

What caused Lucifer to fall?
What caused Peter to sink in the waves?

➤ **Appeal to the logic of the personal experience of your hearers.**
For example:

How do you feel about braggadocios people?
Do you like being around someone who is eager to impress with money, clothes, or status?
Has stubborn pride ever caused you to blow it?
Do you like to receive wages for your work?

A biblical example of this is Paul's point to the Corinthians regarding wages for the pastor.

Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they

ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:6-12).

➤ **Appeal to the logic of your own personal experience.**

Maybe you've experienced something like this in your life.

A young man is trying to impress a young lady at the pool. He is a novice diver but a friend challenges him to do a flip off the high dive. His pride won't let him back down so he climbs the ladder, inches to the end of the board, lifts off gracefully - and lands on his back with a mighty whack! Because of his pride he ends up with a red back *and* a red face. Now your listeners know that you understand pride.

It is important to appeal to the logic of these three areas because sometimes we don't see the connection.¹⁰⁸ A listener who happens to hear 1 Timothy 5:1 may not readily see the point.

1 Timothy 5:1 – “It is detrimental to your ministry to sharply rebuke an older man.” Why? It seems like occasionally it might be useful to confront him.

- The meaning of “harshly rebuke” is...to be rude.
- We are to exhort him as if he were our own father.
- Aha! With this clarification the listener now makes the connection.

Sometimes we don't buy it because it seems contrary to real life. We don't really believe the statement.¹⁰⁹ For example, consider Romans 8:28.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 32.

Romans 8:28 – “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

- Explain – All things.

What objections would be raised to this idea?

How can good come from losing a child to a drunk driver?

How can good come from a messy divorce?

- **These hidden objections or unspoken obstacles must be addressed.**

How does it work? Why is it true? What is the connection? Sometimes we don't buy it because something else is even more important to us. Whatever we BELIEVE the most is what we are going to do. Human nature will naturally revert to instincts of survival and preservation.

- If the preacher is talking about greed versus giving the listener will be thinking...(but money makes me feel secure.)
- If the preacher is extolling the virtues of Purity over acceptance a young lady might be thinking...(but I want to impress a boy.)
- If the preacher is urging the factory worker to value Honesty over employment the worker will be thinking...(but I want to keep my job.)

Because of this human tendency, we must surface the competing beliefs or attitudes so that the listener can feel their full force, and then show why acting on the biblical statement is even more desirable.¹¹⁰

In summary, it is important for the preacher to consider what his audience will believe. The modern listener will not believe it just because the preacher says it. He needs to be engaged and carefully persuaded that the message is worth believing.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

STEP 8

APPLYING THE BIG IDEA

11:00 – 12 NOON

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to...

- Apply the third developmental question, “So what?” to a Big Idea.

Question Number Three addresses BEHAVIOR. We have learned that an idea can be explained or proven. An idea can also be applied. The following questions help the listener determine what the truth means in practical behavioral terms. These are the questions they will be asking as they listen to the sermon.

- So what?
- What difference does it make?
- What does it look like in everyday situations?
- Where does it show up in real life?
- What are the implications?
- What are the practical applications?
- How exactly do they do it?
- How specifically does it occur in daily events?
- How can I concretely and specifically visualize this for my listeners?
- What ought to happen?
- What ought to change?¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 29.

These questions are basic to applying the Big Idea. They summarize what the preacher will consider as he evaluates what difference the message will make in the listener.

- “So What?”
- “Where does it show up in real life?”
- “What does it look like?”

Relevancy occurs when the listener senses, “This message has some bearing on my life. I can ‘**see**’ how it applies to a specific situation.” One observer has voiced what many people feel; “Make me laugh, Make me cry, Make me move.” We are strong at “explanation,” and explanation is needed BUT explanation does not necessarily change behavior.

Our goal in speaking is not knowledge because knowledge alone can be irrelevant. The Athenians that Paul spoke to were eager for knowledge but did not have a heart for God. The pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is unfulfilling. This is illustrated by Paul’s interaction with the Athenians at the Areopagus.

Acts 17:19-2

Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.” (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) NIV

- Our goal in speaking is not knowledge, but **godly behavior**. The speaker must make the application; the listener usually doesn’t make it himself.¹¹²

¹¹² Ibid., 36.

- The sermon is an “extended meditation,” which results in an understanding not only of what is said, but also why it is good wisdom and where it is operating or can operate in our lives (note the three developmental questions).
- The response of the listener should be, “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 110:103)
- The way to be relevant is to think about where the idea shows up in your own life and where it shows up in the lives of the people to whom you preach. Take time to plot their life experiences and consider where the truth you are teaching intersects their lives.¹¹³
 - 1) How would it show up in a person’s work?¹¹⁴
 - 2) How would it show up in their dwelling situations?
 - 3) How would it show up in the different stages of marriages?
 - 4) How have people experienced various situations?

Using Luke 18:9-14, lead the students through the process of applying the three developmental questions. Read the passage and refer to the outline on the next page as you discuss the questions. At the end of the session refer them to Appendix D (“Considerations for Application”) for further study.

Which of the three questions seems to best fit the emphasis of this passage?

- What do I need to explain?
 - Who were the Pharisees?
 - Who were Tax Collectors?
 - What is fasting?
- Do I believe it?
 - Does God really accept sinners?
 - Humility sounds great but if I don’t proclaim my virtues then who will?
- So what?
 - How do I humble myself?
 - Should I stand in a corner at church and beat my chest?

¹¹³ Ibid., 37.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 37,38.

Luke 18:9-14, NIV

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:

¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹ The **Pharisee** stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³ “But the **tax collector** stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Outline of Luke 18:9-14

- I. Sometimes pride blinds us to our condition and we miss out on being justified. (vs. 9-14)
 - A. Some people approach God in prayer and thank him that they are not like other people.
 - B. As a result they focus on their own spiritual accomplishments and lose sight of God.
 - C. Some people pray for mercy and humble themselves because they recognize their great sin.
 - D. As a result their focus is on God and His great mercy.
- II. God encourages people to humble themselves so He can exalt them. (vs. 14)
 - A. Only the humble and contrite can be justified.
 - B. Any one who exalts himself will be humbled.
 - C. Any one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Subject: What does pride do?

Complement: Pride blinds a person to their true condition.

Big Idea: People miss out on being justified because pride blinds them to their real condition and as a result they miss out on being justified.

STEP 9**GIVING PURPOSE TO THE BIG IDEA****1:15 – 2:45 PM****Performance Objectives:**

The student will be able to...

- Explain the relationship between the purpose statement and the homiletical idea.

An analogy from archery can clarify the relationship between the big idea and the purpose statement. The big idea of a sermon is the **arrow**, and the **target** is the statement of purpose. The arrow is what you're talking about and the target is what you want it to accomplish.

As a target determines the flight of the arrow so the purpose statement helps a sermon accomplish its purpose of changed lives. It clears the fog away and helps the audience understand what you are talking about. Listeners will be able to follow the preacher because they know he is talking about one thing.

With a plain purpose statement it is clear how the listener should walk and how he should live. It makes clear what God wants to happen in their lives. And not only does it help the listener it helps the preacher, too.

When the preacher is clear on what he is trying to accomplish with his sermon he is more focused and energetic. A singular purpose gives energy to the presentation. It keeps the preacher involved in and excited about his message.

But How? How does a preacher go about determining the purpose of the text? Well, it is important to remember that *your* purpose has to reflect the original purpose. And the original purpose was always aimed at affecting change. So the short answer is. Think change! What needs to happen as a result of this? The third developmental question has already lead to some thinking in this area but now it is time to be more specific.

In this regard Dr. Bryan Chapell notes that the key concept in developing the purpose statement of your sermon is identifying the Fallen Condition Focus. (FCF) “The FCF is the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or for whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage.”¹¹⁵

A fallen condition could be any number of problems brought on by sin. Pride, greed, selfishness, deceit, fear, and apathy are examples of a fallen condition focus.

¹¹⁵ Chapell, 42.

To ensure an accurate purpose statement the FCF must be consistent with the text.

This can be accomplished by considering three questions.

1. What does the text say?
2. What concern(s) did the text address (in its context)?
3. What do listeners share in common with those to (or about) whom it was written or the one by whom it was written?¹¹⁶

In *Preparing Expository Sermons*, Ramesh Richard highlights the benefits of defining the purpose of a sermon. He says that a clear purpose:

- Focuses the introduction of the sermon on the need that will be raised in the sermon.
- Determines what must be included and/or excluded in the body of the sermon.
- Influences the sermon's conclusion and any application.
- Helps in choosing the illustrations that will help accomplish the purpose of the sermon.
- Provides a more objective way to measure the proficiency or success of the sermon.
- Most importantly, it directly contributes to the form of the Big Idea.
- The purpose of the sermon is the key link from text to sermon.¹¹⁷

Dr. Robinson rightly observes that, “Stating the purpose of a sermon as though it were an instructional objective makes the sermon more direct and effective.”¹¹⁸ He then refers to the following table, drawn up by Roy B. Zuck, which contains a list of verbs that are helpful in formulating a Purpose Statement.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹¹⁷ Richard, 78.

¹¹⁸ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 109.

If the goal is:	Knowledge	Insight	Attitude	Skill
Then the verb can be:	List State Enumerate Recite Recall Write Identify Memorize Know Trace Delineate Become aware of Become familiar with Become cognizant of Define Describe Recognize	Discriminate between Differentiate between Compare Contrast Classify Select Choose Separate Evaluate Examine Comprehend Reflect on Think through Discern Understand Discover	Determine to Develop Have confidence in Appreciate Be convinced of Be sensitive to Commit yourself to Be enthusiastic about Desire to Sympathize with View Plan Feel satisfied about	Interpret Apply Internalize Produce Use Practice Study Solve Experience Explain Communicate Assist in Pray about ¹¹⁹

- Dr. Haddon Robinson suggests that when you get the purpose statement in place, sketch out the conclusion before you finish the sermon. This will ensure that the body of the sermon builds to the appropriate conclusion.
- A Purpose statement begins with **TO**. What would I expect an audience to do as a result of this message?
- Visualize a time in which they would use this.

Return to Luke 18:9-14. Apply these questions to the passage. What do I want to happen in the lives of my listener's as a result of hearing this sermon? What would be a good purpose statement? At the conclusion of this session refer the students to Appendix

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 110.

E, (“Moving from the Big Idea to the Homiletical Idea”) for further study on developing the Big Idea into a sermon.

Here is an example of what the Subject, Complement, Big Idea, and Purpose Statement could be.

Subject: What does pride do?

Complement: Pride blinds a person to their true condition.

Big Idea: People miss out on being justified because pride blinds them to their real condition and as a result they miss out on being justified.

Purpose statement: The purpose of this sermon is to convince the listener of his/her great need for Jesus.

After arriving at the purpose statement, review the overall Big Idea Process. Your parting remark should be, “As you prepare your sermon be sure to identify the point the author is making and translate that single thought into a sharp, take home truth.”

Chapter 5: OUTCOMES

The material contained in this course was drawn from research and classroom notes in the Doctor of Ministry preaching class called “The Preacher and The Message.” Over the last four years considerable thought has been given to the project of teaching preaching in the Philippines.

In the fall of 2006 I spent the better part of a week in Manila at the invitation of the organized Seventh-day Adventist church. They invited me to come and teach their pastors how to better prepare sermons.

Most of my students were active Filipino pastors and had considerable preaching experience so this seminar focused primarily on the fundamental concept of finding a big idea in order to be clearer in their preaching. Over a two day period this class was taught in Manila to over 60 active pastors who work in the Central Luzon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In addition to the pastors in attendance the class roster included a couple of retired pastors and a few laymen, all of whom were interested in improving their preaching skills. The students were given course completion certificates and credit for Continuing Education at the conclusion of the seminar.

The scope of the class was simple and direct; teach the pastors the big idea process in order to sharpen their effectiveness in the pulpit. Over two days the following course schedule was followed:

COURSE OUTLINE

DAY 1	DAY 2
1) Introduction to the course ➤ 8:30 – 9:15 am - 45 Minutes 2) The importance of a Big Idea ➤ 9:30 – 10:30 am - 1 hour 3) Study the passage ➤ 10:45- 12 - 1.25 hour LUNCH 4) Determine the subject and complement ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours 5) State the Big Idea ➤ 3:00 – 4:30 pm - 1.5 hours	6) Explaining the Big Idea ➤ 8:30-9:30 am 1 hour 7) Proving the Big Idea ➤ 9:45 – 10:45 am - 1 hour 8) Applying the Big Idea ➤ 11:00 – 12 - 1 hour LUNCH 9) Giving purpose to the Big Idea ➤ 1:15 – 2:45 pm - 1.5 hours

The classroom time was a mix of lecture, question and answer, and case study. It was important for me to experience the teaching moment by conducting this seminar. During the two days the segments that went particularly well were always the ones that involved interaction with the students. I found that the most effective way of helping them learn the skills was to work with them through a specific Bible passage and apply the principles to the text.

While the focus of our time was on the parable in Luke 18:9-14 we worked through other Bible passages to get a more general understanding of the process. Working through one Scripture passage at a time was a replication of what they would be doing in their study once they left the class. That is what made the method effective.

This 'lab' experience provided them with a tangible model to follow and it was clear that they were more receptive to the concepts and more retentive of the principles when they experienced the study of the Word first hand. The class was well received by the pastors and after I returned to the states the coordinator of the seminar sent me this letter.

Hello Scott,

It was our pleasure to have you as our guest. We want to acknowledge your initiative to come and share your expertise. Our pastors are telling us that of all the seminars on preaching that they've attended your seminar so far is the most practical and applicable and we are happy for that. Just let us know if you have things to share again to our pastors and we would love to welcome you.¹²⁰

Pastor Israel Bacdayan
Associate Ministerial Secretary
Central Luzon Conference, Philippines

This experience has taught me that finding and preaching a single idea is the most effective way to communicate God's Word. Though it is hard work, in the end it simplifies the task of the preacher and enriches the life of the listener.

¹²⁰ (Israel Bacdayan, November 21, 2006, e-mail message to author)

APPENDIX A

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS: WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?

These questions will help the pastor think about the factors that affect his listeners.

1. Gender

- a. What bearing might this truth have specifically on women?
- b. What bearing might this truth have specifically on men?

2. Age

- a. How could an earliteen or youth live this truth in school or in a dating relationship?
- b. How could a college student respond to this truth at a party?
- c. How could a single mother live this truth before her children?
- d. How could this truth encourage a man in “mid life crisis”?
- e. How could a recently retired executive use this truth as he transitions out of the work world?
- f. How could an elderly widow use this truth in her tight circle of friends?
- g. How could a homeless person use this truth?

3. Social Status

- a. How could the factory worker use this truth in a meeting with his employer?
- b. How could a doctor live out this truth before his patients?

4. Cultural and ethnic background

- a. How could this truth encourage non-Filipino’s who experience racial prejudice?
- b. How could this truth help foreigners impact their Filipino neighbors?

5. Educational level and intelligence

- a. Would an attorney believe this truth is true to his life experiences?
- b. Could a school dropout understand and know what to do with this truth?

6. Belief system

- a. Could a person who does not know the books of the Bible remember and apply this truth?

7. Interests

- a. How is this truth illustrated in an article in the local newspaper?
- b. Is there a hobby of a member of the audience that illustrates this truth?

8. Needs

- a. How does this truth alleviate the stress of life?
- b. How could this truth help a person who is grieving?¹²¹

¹²¹ Keith Doornbos, "A Seminar to Enhance the Effectiveness of Christian Communicators" (Dmin diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999), 152.

APPENDIX B

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS: MOVING FROM AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT TO A REAL LIFE SITUATION

1. Physical need: Abstract: Physical health, hunger, shelter.

Concrete:

- A child who wrecks their bike and experiences pain needs that pain stopped.
- A welfare mom looking for food for her children at the end of the month.
- A homeless man standing on a street corner begging for food.

2. Safety need: Abstract: Financial loss, homeless, fear of attack.

Concrete:

- A father took his daughter to work with him on career day. On that day the father was told he was fired.
- In the evening, when you are in a strange place, and there are no lights, you know that sense of fear, someone or something may wish to hurt you.

3. Love need: Abstract: Feeling unloved or loved.

Concrete:

- His wife left him, taking his children, and restraining him from returning home, his heart was broken, for years he was unable to trust and constantly struggled with the feeling of being unlovable.

4. Esteem needs: Abstract: Identity, importance.

Concrete:

- A young man I knew had a problem with self esteem. He was told by his parents and by educational institutions that he was not a worthwhile person. His lack of esteem affected not only how he looked at himself but how he lived and worked with others. At work he would blow up at the slightest criticism, which cost him many jobs. At home he could not be the husband he should have been because he was constantly fixed on his inadequacies.

5. Self Actualization: Abstract: People need to contribute.

Concrete:

- At an emergency food pantry, a woman dedicates many ours of her week, taking inventories, ordering food, making lists of what goes into each box of food, and when she has completed her tasks and looks at the food that is ready to go out, her face beams with accomplishment, often she has said to me, this is what it is all about – helping others.¹²²

¹²² Keith Doornbos, “A Seminar to Enhance the Effectiveness of Christian Communicators” (Dmin diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1999), 153.

APPENDIX C

DEVELOPING THE BIG IDEA

	<i>EXEGETICAL OUTLINE</i>	<i>THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE</i>		<i>HOMILETICAL OUTLINE</i>
<i>LANGUAGE</i>	Biblical language	Universal language	DEVELOPMENTAL QUESTIONS Explain? Buy? Where does it show up?	Contemporary language
<i>TIME</i>	Biblical time setting	Any time setting		Current time setting
<i>AUDIENCE</i>	Author's audience	Any audience		Preacher's audience
<i>ORDER OF THOUGHT</i>	Written order of phrases	Reasoning order of phrases		Reasoning order
<i>EMPHASIS</i>	Information, accuracy	Information, accuracy, simplicity, clarity		Information, accuracy, simplicity, clarity, interest, relevance

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¹²³ Don Sunukjian, *Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary D. Min. Course Notes*, (2004), 11.

APPENDIX D

CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

“Application may be **content** oriented, relating to what the hearers should believe or value, or it may be **conduct** oriented, relating to what they should do or obey. Often these two orientations in application are intermingled simply because people will often do only what they value.”¹²⁴

1. Here are some application questions to consider.

- What is the present-day relevance of the text?
- What kind of application should you draw from the text? Content, conduct, or conduct based content?
- Is my application really based on the text? Does it have the authority and authenticity of the text behind it?
- What will convince my audience that this is the application from the text?
- How can I be sure that the people will understand the application of the text? That is, we cannot take it for granted that they have understood the application. Application is not automatic because people are not prone to apply truths to themselves. They would rather apply them to someone else!¹²⁵

2. Make application notes as you study.

Some will need to be dropped and others developed. Eugene Lowry suggests an interesting integration. “Wear the hats of scholar and homiletician throughout the sermon preparation process.”¹²⁶

It is important to remember that application should be the last endeavor. Of first importance is a study of the text to learn what it meant to the original audience. Moving

¹²⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 49.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 49.

to application to early can short circuit the study process and impose conclusions and applications that were not intended by the biblical author.

Note: Develop specific and extended applications, not brief, general ones. Be concrete, not abstract or vague.

- Visualize...in detail...the actions you want the listeners to have.
- Reproduce and rehearse in front of them the internal thoughts or conversations you want them to have.
- Act it out! Give them a “picture.”¹²⁷
- Nothing happens in the listener apart from specific pictures.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 39.

APPENDIX E

MOVING FROM THE BIG IDEA TO THE HOMILETICAL IDEA

The Homiletical idea begins with the Big Idea. The Big Idea that is derived from a study of the text. Once the Big Idea is understood the next question becomes; How can I phrase the Big Idea so it captures the truth I want to communicate and the attention of the people I want to reach?

- A good homiletical idea will cement the message in the mind and heart of the listener.
- It is usually discovered in rare and unexpected places; a magazine, news story, commercial, or familiar phrase - rephrased. Slogans may seem trite but they stick in people's minds.
- It is important to have a good homiletical idea so the audience can tune into your message but just as importantly it gives you something to talk about! It becomes the focal point of your thoughts.

A homiletical idea is sometimes called a preaching idea because it is made for oral communication. Oral communication is different than reading because a reader can easily review what is written on the page. Listening to a sermon is quite different than reading a book because the ideas are flowing by with no chance of review.

Dr. Robinson makes this astute observation about the homiletical idea, "...You are not lecturing to people about the Bible. You are talking to people about themselves from

the Bible. This statement, (homiletical idea) therefore, should be in fresh, vital, contemporary language.”¹²⁸

The Homiletical idea should be stated in the active voice instead of the passive voice. Notice the difference as illustrated below.

Active Voice: A sentence using the active voice has the subject *performing* the action. The subject acts – as expressed in the verb.

➤	The cat scratched the girl.
➤	The cat will scratch the girl if she is teased.
➤	Cats have scratched people for centuries.

In each example above, the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb. Notice how that changes in the passive voice.

Passive Voice: A sentence using the passive voice has the subject of the verb *receiving* the action. That means the subject is acted upon. Using the active voice will make the idea more vivid for the listeners.

➤	The girl was scratched by the cat.
➤	The girl will be scratched by the cat if she teases it.
➤	People have been scratched by cats for centuries.

In summary, the homiletical idea is the biblical truth applied to life. Dr. Robinson states this principle and builds on it by offering these suggestions for framing a homiletical idea.

¹²⁸ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 104.

- State the idea as simply and memorably as possible. Make each word count. State it for the ear. Listeners should not have to work to remember it.
- State the idea in concrete and familiar words. Study ads in magazines for slogans you remember. If you were given one sentence in which to communicate our idea to someone who didn't know religious jargon and who couldn't write it down, how would you say it?
- State the idea so that it focuses on response. How do you want your listeners to respond? Instead of "You can rejoice in trials because they lead to maturity," try "Rejoice when hard times come." If you know what your listeners should do, tell them.
- State the idea so that your listeners sense you are talking to them about them.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Ibid., 105,106.

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VITA

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